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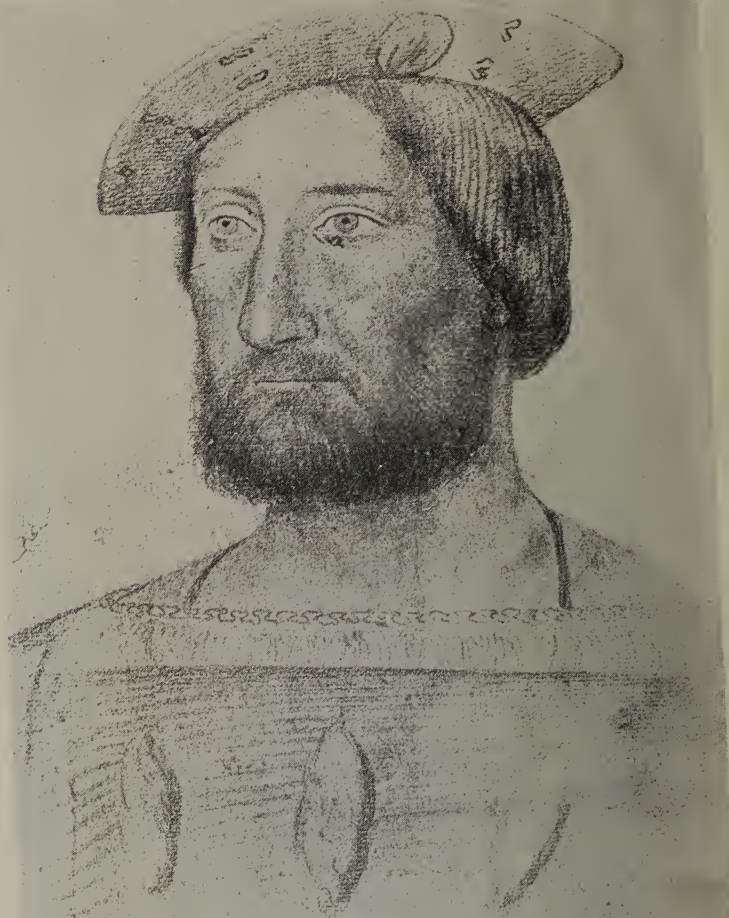


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Since going to press the author has brought
“The History of the House of Guise” down
to the year 1671.

THE BROOD OF FALSE LORRAINE

VOL. I



MONSEIGNEUR DE GUISE

** Claude de Lorraine*

5^e fils de René II. né le 20. 8^{bre} 1469. mort le 12. avril 1550.

CLAUDE DE LORRAINE, FIRST DUC DE GUISE.

[Frontispiece

THE BROOD OF FALSE LORRAINE

THE HISTORY OF THE DUCS DE GUISE
(1496—1588)

BY

H. NOEL WILLIAMS

AUTHOR OF "FIVE FAIR SISTERS," "A PRINCESS OF INTRIGUE,"
"UNRULY DAUGHTERS," "RIVAL SULTANAS," ETC.

WITH 24 ILLUSTRATIONS

"There rode the brood of false Lorraine, the curses of our land."
MACAULAY, *Ivry*.

IN TWO VOLUMES
VOL. I

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THE BROOD OF FALSE LORRAINE

CHAPTER I

First meeting of Claude de Lorraine, Comte de Guise, and Antoinette de Bourbon—The House of Guise is founded by their marriage—René II, Duke of Lorraine, and his sons—Character of Guise—The advancement of his fortunes his main object—Invasion of the Milanese by François I—Guise is severely wounded at Marignano—His recovery regarded as “a veritable prodigy of the art of surgery”—He accompanies the King on his triumphal entry into Milan—He returns to France—Birth of his eldest daughter, Marie de Lorraine, afterwards Queen of Scotland—Guise inherits the seigneurie of Joinville, through the decision of his mother, Philippa of Guelders, to take the veil—Birth of François de Lorraine, afterwards second Duc de Guise—The Comte and Comtesse de Guise take up their residence at the Château of Joinville.

ONE day, towards the end of the winter of 1513, a young man and a girl might have been observed in conversation in a room in the Hôtel des Tournelles in Paris, that ancient palace where mad King Charles VI had amused himself with the first playing-cards, where Bedford had lorded it as Regent of France for his infant nephew Henri VI of England, and where Charles VII, “*le Victorieux*,” had forgotten Jeanne d’Arc. Both were good to look upon; the young man—scarcely more than a lad, since he was but in his eighteenth year—tall, supple, straight as a lance-shaft, with a fresh complexion, fair hair, and a pleasant smile; the girl, who was some two years his senior, not very tall, but well formed, with beautiful blue eyes, abundant chestnut hair, and regular features, though the nose was perhaps a trifle too long for perfect beauty.

From the richness of their dress, it was evident that both belonged to the inner circle of the Court; and such, indeed, was the case, since the young man was Claude de Lorraine, Comte de Guise, second son of René II, Duke of Lorraine, the conqueror of Charles the Bold of Burgundy, while his fair companion was Antoinette de Bourbon, eldest sister of Charles, Comte (afterwards Duc) de Vendôme, first Prince of the Blood.

Their meeting had been a chance one. Guise had come with his friend, the young Duc de Valois, soon to become King of France under the name of François I, to visit the latter's *fiancée*, Madame Claude, elder daughter of Louis XII and Anne de Bretagne, and, whether merely to leave the betrothed couple to themselves or already attracted towards one another, they had drawn aside and begun a conversation on their own account. However that may be, the *tête-à-tête* was to have a very interesting result, for, a few days later, Guise demanded of the Comte de Vendôme his sister's hand, and Vendôme, who was himself betrothed to Françoise d'Alençon, a cousin of Guise on his mother's side, and who was aware that the young Lorraine prince, whom rumour had already assigned to Louis XII's younger daughter, Madame Renée, must be regarded as a most excellent match for Antoinette, very slenderly dowered, it should be mentioned, for a maiden of such high degree, gave a ready consent. As for Antoinette, she showed herself duly appreciative of her good fortune, and, the consent of the King and Queen having been obtained, on the following April 18 the marriage was celebrated in the church of Saint-Paul, in the presence of their Majesties and all the Court, the contract having been previously signed at the Hôtel des Tournelles.

Thus, by this alliance between the Lorraine princes and the Bourbons, destined to find themselves one day in such bitter rivalry as the respective champions of the Catholic and Huguenot parties, was founded that great House of Guise, whose power and ambition was

to increase so rapidly that, half a century hence, it would overshadow the throne itself, and a little later would aim at nothing less than its usurpation.

Claude de Lorraine, Comte de Guise, occupied a somewhat singular position at the Court of France. His father, Duke René II, who had united the two branches of his House, had had six sons—besides two who had died in infancy—of whom Claude was the second. All these sons were the fruit of René's second marriage with Philippa of Guelders, to espouse whom he had divorced his childless first consort, Jeanne d'Harcourt. But, though the courts of Lorraine had annulled the first marriage, the Papal Bull confirming their decision had not been promulgated when René took unto himself a second wife ; and, since Jeanne d'Harcourt was still alive when Philippa's eldest son, Antoine, was born, it was quite feasible that Claude de Lorraine might one day attempt to dispute his elder brother's succession to the ducal crown.

To avert this catastrophe, René decided to remove his second son from Lorraine and make him a subject of the King of France ; and in May 1506 Claude became a naturalised Frenchman, while two months later the Duke executed a will by which he bequeathed his sovereignty of Lorraine, together with the pompous titles of King of Jerusalem, Sicily, Hungary, Anjou, and Provence, to his eldest son ; while the French fiefs which the House of Lorraine had acquired by marriage—Guise, Aumale, Mayenne, Joinville, Elbeuf, Harcourt, Longjumeau, Boves, Sablé, Laferté-Bernard, Esgallière, Orgon, and Lambesc—were left to the second. Notwithstanding these appanages, Claude de Lorraine affected to consider himself a foreign prince rather than a subject of the King of France, claimed precedence over all the French nobles, even the Princes of the Blood, and adopted the Lorraine coat-of-arms with the *alérions argent*, which he placed boldly over those of the eight

sovereign Houses—Hungary, Naples, Sicily, Jerusalem, Aragon, Anjou, Guelders, Flanders, and Bar—from which he was descended. This strange pretension was tacitly admitted by Louis XII and François I, and for some years by Henri II also; but in 1551 the last-named monarch, alarmed by the airs of sovereignty which the Guises were giving themselves, discountenanced it, by taking possession of the title of Duc d'Anjou for his third son, afterwards Henri III.

Two years after executing this will, René II made a very edifying end at Fains, in the Barrois, surrounded by all his children, whom with his last breath he enjoined to live in peace and amity with one another. This recommendation was certainly necessary, for, though his third son, later celebrated under the name of the Cardinal Jean de Lorraine, was, notwithstanding his tender years, already provided with the rich bishopric of Metz, the three younger boys, Ferry, Louis, and François were, to their intense chagrin, left practically dependent upon the generosity of the head of the family; and the new Duke of Lorraine, very dissatisfied with this arrangement, appears to have contemplated providing for them at the expense of Guise. However, on the advice of his Council, he eventually decided to respect his father's will, and even confirmed it by letters-patent. Each of the three cadets entered the French service, and each, in his turn, met a soldier's death in the Italian wars of François I; Ferry being killed at Marignano, François at Pavia, and Louis at the siege of Naples in 1528.

The young Comte de Guise had been very cordially received at the French Court, not less, it would appear, on account of his personal qualities than on that of his rank and wealth. For he was a handsome youth, gay, good-humoured, proficient in all manly exercises, and of very agreeable manners, and possessed of that talent for making himself popular with all classes which was so marked a characteristic of his descendants, and which,

in the case of his famous and ill-fated grandson, the third Duc de Guise, amounted to something like genius. From the moment of his arrival in France, mere lad though he was at the time, he seemed resolved to gain the favour of the nation by carefully studying its tastes and prejudices, while "he observed not less attentively the character of individuals, in order to regulate his conduct towards them,"¹ with the result that in a surprisingly short time he had succeeded in gaining the good-will of the nobility, the *bourgeoisie*, and the people. Few, even of those most skilled in the reading of character, could have divined that so pleasing an exterior concealed a cold calculation, a persevering ambition, very seldom indeed found in one so young.

Guise did not fail to pay assiduous court to the young Duc de Valois, heir-presumptive to the throne, and he shared that prince's mortification and alarm when, a few months after the death of Anne de Bretagne, Louis XII, who had appeared altogether inconsolable for the loss of his consort, took unto himself a third wife, in the person of Henry VIII's sister, Mary Tudor, a sprightly maiden of eighteen. The count was one of the princes charged to proceed to Boulogne to meet the new Queen, and on the morrow of the marriage he figured with success in a brilliant tournament, in which he unhorsed somewhat rudely Charles Brandon, Duke of Suffolk, Mary Tudor's ardent admirer and future husband, who had followed his inamorata to France. Fortunately for the hopes which the Lorraine prince had based on the accession of François de Valois to the throne, the sickly old monarch did not survive his very ill-advised matrimonial experiment many weeks, and under the new *régime* Guise found himself in high favour. François I appreciated his powerful connections by both birth and marriage, his apparent devotion to his person, his capacity far beyond his years, his taste for luxury and elegance, and, in particular, his

¹ Comte René de Bouillé, *les Ducs de Guise*.

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martial disposition, which accorded so well with the King's own inclinations. In that brilliant Court, peopled with brave men and beautiful women, resplendent in cloth-of-gold and of silver, in satins and velvets and jewels, which seemed to have no thought but for gaiety and pleasure, for amorous intrigues and *fêtes galantes*, no one was more conspicuous than the Comte de Guise; but, even in the midst of his pleasures, he never for a moment lost sight of the object which he always kept steadily before him—the advancement of his fortunes.

And soon he was afforded an opportunity of distinguishing himself in another sphere.

The new King, undeterred by the sad experiences of his predecessors in Italy, had resolved upon the conquest of the Milanese, the inheritance of which he claimed through his great-grandmother Valentina Visconti, daughter of Gian Galeazzo, Duke of Milan, and in the late summer of 1515 he crossed the Alps, at the head of a large and splendidly equipped army, and descended into the fertile plains of Lombardy. Guise accompanied him, as lieutenant of his maternal uncle, Charles, Duke of Guelders, who commanded the *landsknechts* in the service of France, called from their black and white banner the "Black Bands." But, scarcely had the army entered Italy, than the Duke, having received intelligence that his dominions were threatened by Charles of Austria, was obliged to return home, leaving the command of the *landsknechts* to his nephew, who had already gained the good-will of the soldiers by the courage, energy, and consideration for their welfare which he had shown during the difficult and dangerous passage of the mountains.

The young prince's military qualities were soon to be put to a more severe test, for on September 14, near Marignano, he and his *landsknechts*, who composed the vanguard of the army, were suddenly and furiously attacked by a force of 24,000 Swiss mercenaries in the service of Maximilian Sforza, Duke of Milan. Since

the *landsknechts* were aware that it had been François I's intention to endeavour to seduce the Swiss from their loyalty to Sforza, for which purpose he had brought with him a great sum of money, they believed that the Swiss had stipulated that, besides the gold, the King should deliver to them their German competitors, between whom and themselves a bitter commercial rivalry existed. Taken entirely by surprise, utterly outnumbered, and convinced that treachery was at work, they gave way in confusion, despite all their youthful commander's efforts to make them stand their ground, and would in all probability have been cut to pieces, but for the timely arrival of the King in person at the head of the French men-at-arms, who charged valiantly upon the Swiss and gave Guise time to rally his hard-pressed troops.

The battle continued with varying fortune until darkness suspended the combat, and was resumed at daybreak, when the French artillery, which had come up during the night, opened fire with murderous effect, making ghastly lanes through the serried ranks of the Swiss. Then, the *landsknechts* under Guise, burning to avenge their defeat of the previous day, advanced to the attack, and a furious hand-to-hand conflict ensued. One of the count's younger brothers, Ferry de Lorraine, was killed at his side, and he himself narrowly escaped a similar fate. A ball from an arquebus shattered his right arm, another pierced his thigh, and a third killed his horse, which fell, pinning him to the ground. Sore wounded and unable to rise, he would certainly have been slain had not an heroic equerry, Adam Fouvert, of Nuremberg, covered him with his own body and received most of the blows intended for his master.

Eventually, the Swiss gave way, and victory remained with the French; and, so soon as the battle was over, another of Guise's equeries, accompanied by a Scottish gentleman of the King's Household named James, came, by François I's orders, to search for the count

amongst the piles of dead and wounded which covered the ground. It was only with great difficulty that they succeeded in identifying him, so disfigured was he by his numerous wounds—if we are to believe contemporary chroniclers, he had received no less than twenty-one—and when they had done so, he gave scarcely any sign of life. They lifted him on to James's horse and conveyed him to the tent of his elder brother, the Duke of Lorraine, and, though his case appeared at first beyond hope, thanks to his vigorous constitution and the care which was taken of him, he made, contrary to all expectations, a complete recovery. His cure, we are told, was regarded as little short of miraculous, and “has remained celebrated in the annals of surgery, as a veritable prodigy of the art and as marking the epoch at which operations became more intelligent and more certain.”¹ In fact, a month after the battle of Marignano, Guise, though still, of course, suffering a good deal of pain from his wounds, was able to accompany the King on his triumphal entry into Milan, “as captain-general of the *landsknechts*, with four lieutenants, all habited in cloth-of-gold and white velvet, carrying his arm in a sling, his thigh being supported by an equerry, and attracting, notwithstanding, the admiration of the army and the inhabitants by his air of distinction.”

Having signed a treaty with the Swiss, which subsequently took the form of a “perpetual peace,” and was destined to endure so long as the French Monarchy itself, and left part of his victorious army to occupy the newly conquered territory, François I disbanded the remainder of his troops and about the middle of December set out for France. Guise accompanied him so far as Lyons, where the Queen and his adoring mother and sister, Louise of Savoy, and Marguerite d'Angoulême, Duchess d'Alençon, received the triumphant monarch with transports of joy, and then requested permission to rejoin his wife, who, on November 22, at the Château

¹ Bouillé, *les Ducs de Guise*.

of Bar-le-Duc, had given birth to her first child, Marie de Lorraine, who was one day to marry James V of Scotland and to become the mother of the beautiful and ill-fated Mary Stuart.

The Comtesse de Guise came so far as Joinville to meet her husband, and their reunion was a very tender one; for, if Guise had been guided more by interest than by sentiment when he had demanded the hand of Antoinette de Bourbon, he had, nevertheless, become warmly attached to her; while Antoinette, on her side, had conceived for her husband an intense devotion, which never wavered throughout their married life.

The seigneurie of Joinville, which had become the property of the House of Lorraine through the marriage, in 1393, of Ferry, Comte de Vaudémont, younger son of Duke Jean I, with Marguerite de Joinville, was, by the terms of René II's will, eventually to form part of Guise's appanage; but the Duchess-dowager of Lorraine, Philippa of Guelders, had the enjoyment of it during her life-time. However, Guise had not to wait until his mother's death to enter into possession of it, as, in December 1516, Philippa, who had become exceedingly devout, suddenly announced her intention "of sacrificing her old age to the service of God, after having employed her best years in the service of the world," and entered the Couvent de Sainte-Claire at Pont-à-Mousson.¹

His mother's renunciation of the world not only

¹ The Pope sent the Duchess a brief dispensing her from the novitiate and from all austerities; but Philippa desired to pass her year of probation as the humblest novice, sleeping in the common dormitory, going barefoot, and rigidly observing every fast. Her health, which had been for some time past very delicate, did not permit of such mortifications of the flesh, and she fell seriously ill. She recovered, however, and, what is more, her health from that moment improved to so extraordinary a degree that, according to a manuscript history of the family preserved in the Bibliothèque Nationale, "it seemed as though she had become a young girl." She lived for twenty-seven years in the Couvent de Sainte-Claire in so strict an observance of its regulations that she declined to read a letter, even from one of her own children, until the mother-superior had perused its contents.

considerably increased Guise's revenues, but made him the owner of the Château of Joinville, one of the finest country-residences in North-Eastern France. He and his wife, however, did not immediately remove thither, since, Antoinette being again enceinte, he deemed it advisable to remain, until after her child was born, at Bar, where skilled medical aid was more easily obtainable, besides which the château, not having been inhabited for more than ten years, stood in need of considerable renovation.

Early in the following year, on Friday, February 16, 1520, the Comtesse de Guise gave birth to a son, who, on March 19, was baptized by Gilles de Luxembourg, Bishop of Châlons, in the chapel of the Château of Bar. The King, represented by the Cardinal de Lorraine, and Duke Antoine were his godfathers, and, in honour of his Majesty, he received the name of François. History would call him "Monsieur de Guise le Grand."

A few weeks after the birth of their little son, the count and countess removed to the Château of Joinville, which was henceforth to be so closely connected with the eventful history of the Guises.

Built in the eleventh century by Étienne de Vaux, first Sire de Joinville, on the wooded spur of a hill overlooking a little arm of the River Marne, this ancient château had witnessed many stirring scenes in the four centuries of its existence. It had seen the famous Jean de Joinville, the companion-in-arms and chronicler of Saint-Louis, ride forth to the Crusades; it had sheltered Jeanne d'Arc at the beginning of her mission; it had been sacked by the "*Tard-venus*," and, in the dark days of the Hundred Years War, had been partially burned by the Burgundians. It was an imposing structure, and of great strength from a military point of view. Behind the main building was a long block, flanked by three towers with pointed roofs, dominating the southern slope of the spur. The northern face was defended by an immense tower, the primitive donjon,

which local tradition assigned to the time of the Roman occupation of Gaul, and by several smaller towers, all strongly fortified. At the north-east angle of the main building, a system of semicircular fortifications linked the château to the fortress; and in the space thus protected stood a large chapel with a tall pointed steeple. A covered gallery connected the château with the chapel.

On the extinction of the male line of the Guises, with the death of François Joseph, seventh Duc de Guise, in 1675, the Château of Joinville passed into the possession of the Orléans family, and in the time of Philippe Égalité was unhappily sold and demolished. The charming pleasure-house known as the Château du Jardin, built by Claude de Lorraine for his wife, Antoinette de Bourbon, in 1545, and of which we shall speak in a subsequent chapter, is, however, still standing.

CHAPTER II

Beginning of the rivalry of François I and Charles of Austria—François's candidature for the Imperial throne encouraged by the Comte de Guise—The King of Spain elected Emperor, under the title of Charles V—The rival monarchs compared—War breaks out—Guise in Spain—His heroism at the passage of the Bidassoa—Fontarabia taken by the French—Letter of Louise of Savoy to Antoinette de Bourbon—Rewards which Guise receives for his military services—The count distinguishes himself on the northern frontier—He acquires the reputation of protector of the capital—Beginning of the extraordinary popularity of the Guises with the Parisians—Critical situation of France—Treason of the Connétable de Bourbon—The governments of Champagne and Burgundy conferred upon Guise—Invasion of the Imperial *landsknechts*—Guise takes the field against them and almost destroys them at Neufchâteau—He reassures the Parisians, alarmed by the advance of the Anglo-Flemish army—François I again invades the Milanese—The disaster of Pavia.

THE death of the Emperor Maximilian, in January 1517, opened the succession to the Empire, and the young Charles of Austria, already in possession of the vast heritage of Ferdinand the Catholic, offered himself to the suffrages of the Electors. The union of Spain, Naples, the Netherlands, and the Empire under a single head was a contingency which it was impossible for François I to contemplate without alarm, and one which he was determined to avert. Had he used his influence to secure the election of one of the other German princes, he would probably have succeeded in keeping Charles out; but, dazzled by the brilliant prospect of becoming the lay head of Christendom and the defender of the Faith against the Moslem, he entered the lists in person, vowing that "he would have the Empire if it cost him three million crowns, and that three years afterwards he would be in Constantinople or his grave."

The Comte de Guise was one of the warmest supporters of the young monarch's pretensions, and combated

strenuously the opinion of those who prudently sought to dissuade him from prosecuting his candidature and counselled him to champion some prince with Germanic qualifications less shadowy than those which he himself possessed.¹ In so doing, it is probable that Guise was actuated far more by consideration for his own than for his Sovereign's interests. For François, once elected Emperor, would, in gratitude for his services, have been able to employ his Imperial right to place the crown of Jerusalem upon Guise's head and enable the House of Lorraine to realise an ambition which they had cherished for generations. The count constituted himself the intermediary between the King of France and the Electors and had recourse to every means to secure François's success, bribery being freely resorted to. But all his efforts proved insufficient to counterbalance the claims of a competitor whose House had already furnished six wearers of the Imperial purple, and whose hereditary dominions—bordering as they did on Turkey—enabled him to present himself as the natural defender of Germany against Moslem aggression; and on July 5, 1519, the young King of Spain was duly elected Emperor, under the title of Charles V.

François was deeply chagrined at his defeat; Charles, though successful, was unable to pardon the King of France for having endeavoured to deprive him of the Imperial crown; and less than two years from that day witnessed the beginning of that long and sanguinary struggle between France and the House of Austria which, with an occasional breathing-space, was to continue until the Treaty of Cateau-Cambrésis in 1557.

Never were there rivals more dissimilar in temperament and character than those two monarchs. François, brave, open-handed, magnificent, excelling in all manly exercises, capable of generous and even lofty impulses; but vain, indolent, and self-indulgent, and quick to

¹ He came forward, in theory, as a German prince, basing his claim on the lordship of the old Kingdom of Arles, a fief of the Empire.

change his plans or to allow himself to be led away by the caprice of the moment, with no restraint, perseverance, or sense of duty. Charles, weak in body, unskilled in the use of arms, caring little for outward display, quiet, reserved, with little generosity and no very high principles, but endowed with a penetrating sagacity, a tireless energy, an indomitable strength of purpose; one of those men who are neither intoxicated by the smiles of Fortune nor disheartened by her frowns, who shrink from no labour, who retain their presence of mind in the face of every danger. It was the struggle of the preceding century—the struggle between Louis XI and Charles the Bold—over again. But, unhappily for France, the champions had changed places. It was she who now possessed the brave, chivalrous, impetuous warrior; her enemies the cool, adroit, vigilant, tenacious statesman.

In April 1521, the war began on all the frontiers. One French army, under Lautrec, brother of the King's *maîtresse en titre*, Madame de Chateaubriand, defended the Milanese; another, under Bonnivet, more famous for his conquests in the boudoir than his prowess in the field, invaded Spain; a third, commanded by François's brother-in-law, the Duc d'Alençon, operated on the Flemish border.

It was in Spain that Guise made his first campaign against Charles V; indeed, from the moment that he was carried away more dead than alive from the field of Marignano, he never again saw service in Italy. Thus, by a singular piece of good fortune, he was the only one of the French captains of his time who escaped being involved in the disasters of the Peninsula.

The objective of Bonnivet's army was Fontarabia, the key of North-Western Spain, but before the town the Bidassoa, swollen by recent rains, arrested the advance of the French. Bonnivet regarded the passage of the river as impossible, as a strong force of Spaniards, supported by artillery, was drawn up on the opposite bank.

But Guise strongly urged him to make the attempt, and offered to show the way to the army; and, Bonnivet having reluctantly consented, the young prince seized a pike from one of the soldiers and plunged boldly into the stream. His *landsknechts*, after kneeling to kiss the ground, according to their custom before going into action, followed their leader.

The water rose to their shoulders; cannon-shot and arquebus-balls fell thick about them; but there was no thought of turning back, and, struggling on, they gained the further shore, formed up and prepared to charge the enemy. There was, however, no enemy left to charge, for one of those unaccountable panics to which even the bravest troops are occasionally liable, appears to have seized the Spaniards, and they were already in disorderly retreat, "with a cowardice incredible."

Guise immediately advanced against the Château of Béchaubie, which commanded the road to Fontarabia, and, artillery having been brought up, it opened fire with such effect that a breach was soon made in the ramparts. His soldiers, eager to emulate the courage of their leader, cast dice on a drum, in order to decide which of their banners should have the honour of mounting first to the assault; but before the order to advance was given the château surrendered. The town itself capitulated after a brief resistance, and Guise strongly advised that its fortifications should be demolished and the materials used to construct a stronghold on the French bank of the river. But Bonnivet, proud of his conquest, "which he desired to preserve as a monument of his glory," and perhaps a little jealous of the Lorraine prince, persisted in the contrary opinion; and at the conclusion of the campaign they separated on somewhat distant terms.

However, Bonnivet was obliged, in his despatches, to render homage to the courage and ability which his subordinate had shown; and Louise of Savoy wrote

to the Comtesse de Guise that "she ought to consider herself the happiest princess in France, since she possessed the most valiant and most fortunate husband on earth." These flattering words were no doubt very pleasing to the wife, but the husband considered that the Court's appreciation of his prowess might well take some more practical form, and he accordingly demanded and obtained "the revenues, profits, and emoluments of the salt granaries of Mayenne-la-Juhée and la Ferté-Bernard," which amounted to some 24,000 livres, and of which one year's revenues were paid him in advance.

We may here observe that Guise never neglected any opportunity of reaping solid advantages from the royal good-will, and every military service which he rendered his Sovereign was invariably followed by some increase in his revenues or dignities. At the same time, it must be admitted that, if his rewards were sometimes far in excess of his services, he, nevertheless, deserved well of his adopted country. For, though he had no pretensions to be considered a great general, he was certainly a very capable one, since he knew how to combine caution and audacity, and invariably commanded the confidence of his troops.

In the spring of 1522, he was entrusted with the task of protecting the northern frontier, in which he displayed much activity and daring, taking Bapaume and carrying on a successful irregular warfare against the English garrisons of Boulogne and Calais, who were making frequent incursions into French territory. One night, he sallied out from Montreuil with a body of men-at-arms, and fell upon and dispersed an English detachment which was encamped in the neighbourhood. The English, rallying from their surprise, took refuge in a garden protected by thick hedges and encircled by a deep ditch. Notwithstanding the strength of the enemy's position and the danger of being surprised, in his turn, by reinforcements from Boulogne, Guise ordered his men-at-arms to dismount, and, placing

himself at their head, succeeded, after a desperate and sanguinary combat, in storming the place. The English, we are told, perished to a man, since there was not one of them but scorned the idea of surrender.

In the autumn of that year, Guise compelled the Imperialists to raise the siege of Hesdin, a success which made him very popular with the Parisians, who were becoming seriously alarmed at the near approach of the enemy. Paris had at all times been inclined to attach an exaggerated importance to engagements which took place near its gates, and a general who had succeeded in repelling a hostile raid into Champagne or Picardy was in its eyes a far more important personage than one who had gained a pitched battle beyond the Alps. The shrewd and far-sighted Lorraine prince was not slow to appreciate the advantages he would derive from being regarded as the saviour of the capital, and, having once acquired this reputation, he took care to preserve it throughout the rest of his career. From that time, indeed, dates the extraordinary popularity of the Guises. For seventy years they will be the Catholic heroes, the favourites of Fortune, the idols of the people. If sometimes Kings frown upon them, they will have always on their side the shopkeepers and artisans of the capital, the *gamins* who give ovations and make revolutions. Charles IX or Henri III may be King of France, but "our good Monsieur de Guise" will be King of Paris. For the Guises will comprehend admirably the rôle which is expected of them. There will be none so humble as to be beneath their notice; none so meanly clad as to be denied access to them. The poor man will have his alms, the bourgeois his hand-shake, the mob its bow and smile. For seventy years they will rely upon the people to build up a grandeur which will not fail to excite many jealousies among the French nobility, inclined to view with scant favour the elevation of this half-German family. Is it a question of receiving the favours of the King? the King will have no more

loyal subjects. Is it a question of rank, of precedence ? the Guises will claim to be treated as princes of a foreign sovereign House ; always according to the time and the circumstances ; always as their interests may happen to dictate.

The summer of 1523 saw almost the whole of Europe leagued against France, who found herself called upon to face the Emperor, with all Germany, Spain and the Netherlands behind him, Ferdinand of Austria, Henry VIII of England, and the Pope and most of the Italian States. To assist her to make ahead against this formidable coalition, she could count only upon such diversion as the Scots might be able to create, which at best were not likely to keep more than a part of the English forces at home ; upon the Swiss, whose martial ardour began to cool rapidly the moment their pay fell into arrears ; and upon the Duke of Savoy, whose alliance was chiefly valuable because he was able to facilitate the passage of French troops across the Alps.

At this critical juncture, when François I had need of the swords of all his subjects, he was deprived of that of the greatest of them, the Connétable de Bourbon, who, persecuted and threatened with the loss of the greater portion of his vast estates, thanks to the machinations of the King's mother, the avaricious and vindictive Louise of Savoy, entered into secret negotiations with Charles V, and, on the discovery of his treason, fled to Italy and took service under the banner of the Emperor.

The defection of the Constable drew down a sort of proscription upon the Princes of the Blood of the House of Bourbon, and increased, in consequence, the credit and importance of the Comte de Guise. The King, who had already overwhelmed the latter with favours, now bestowed upon him the governments of Burgundy and Champagne, the two provinces most exposed to the attacks of the Imperialist forces in Germany.

In virtue of this appointment, Guise became to all intents and purposes the sovereign of the East of France, with Joinville as his capital, and he made his official entries into Dijon and Troyes "with extraordinary magnificence."

He had very soon, however, to turn his attention to something of much greater importance than pompous entries into towns, for in September 1524, an army of 12,000 *landsknechts* in the Imperial service, commanded by the Counts Wilhelm and Felix von Fürstenberg, and guided by La Mothe-Desnoyers, the Constable's secretary, made a sudden irruption into Burgundy. Meeting with no resistance, the invaders speedily penetrated into the Bassigny, ravaged the environs of Langres, and captured the little town of Coiffy, near the source of the Meuse. Then, following the course of that river, they crossed it near Neufchâteau, where the Comtesse de Guise and her sister-in-law, the Duchess of Lorraine, had taken refuge, and seized the fort of Montéclair. From this coign of vantage, situated as it was between the Meuse and the Marne, they menaced both the provinces which Guise had been charged to defend, and burned and pillaged in all directions.

Meantime, Guise had not been idle. Although he could hope for no outside help, since the greater part of the troops which François I had been able to raise were being employed in a fresh invasion of the Milanese, from which the French had been practically expelled in 1521, while the remainder were concentrated on the Picardy frontier, his courage did not fail him. Having assembled the nobles of Burgundy and their retainers, he threw himself into Chaumont, where he was presently joined by those of Champagne, whom Dorval, his lieutenant in that province, had been engaged in mobilising. His entire force did not exceed 900 men-at-arms; but, though the Germans outnumbered it by more than twelve to one, they were mainly infantry, and in those days, when firearms were still in their

infancy, the man-at-arms, on his powerful barb, possessed an immense advantage over the foot-soldier.

Guise, therefore, had little fear of being unable to cope successfully with the invaders, and, having divided his cavalry into squadrons, he despatched them in various directions, with orders to cut off the enemy's foraging parties, intercept his convoys, and harass him without ceasing. This they did so effectually that in a very short time the Imperialists, finding themselves on the verge of starvation, decided to abandon the places they had captured and repass the Meuse. Accordingly, they broke up their camp at Montéclair and marched towards Neufchâteau, with the intention of crossing the river at that point.

The count, divining their object, decided to attack them in front and rear at once as they were crossing, and despatched two or three hundred of his men-at-arms to the other side of the Meuse, to fall upon the vanguard as soon as it had passed the river; while he himself, with the rest of his force, followed closely upon the heels of the retreating Germans. Unfortunately for the complete success of this operation, the march of the first detachment was delayed by a quarrel between two officers, which arose *en route*, and which ended by one of them thrusting his sword into the other's mouth, so that some of the advance-guard of the enemy succeeded in effecting their escape. But the part which Guise had reserved for himself was entirely successful, and, falling on the rear-guard as it was entering the river, he slaughtered them almost to a man.

"Moved by a sentiment of chivalrous gallantry," writes an historian of the Guises, "the count had wished to procure for the duchess, his sister-in-law, for Antoinette de Bourbon, and for all the ladies of the Court of Lorraine, assembled at that moment at Neufchâteau, the enjoyment of this, to them, novel spectacle; and, having been warned by him, they placed themselves at the windows of the château, where, sheltered from all

danger, they were able to recompense, by their applause and their cries of joy, the courage of the troops, animated by their presence.”¹

Scarcely had Guise returned from conveying the news of the destruction of the German raiders to Lyons, where François I was preparing to set out for Italy, and receiving the King's congratulations upon his victory, than a fresh call was made upon his services. A mixed army of English and Flemings had invaded Picardy, and, driving before them La Trémouille, who had been entrusted with the defence of that province, but whose force was far too weak to offer any effective resistance, had burned Roye, near Montdidier, ravaged all the country along the banks of the Oise, and advanced to within eleven leagues of Paris.

Great was the alarm in the capital. Many of the wealthier citizens packed up their valuables and fled to the South, in the belief that there alone was safety to be found; while those who remained were in such a state of consternation that they appeared quite unable to decide upon the defensive measures which ought to be undertaken. The King sent his chamberlain, Chabot de Brion, to inform them that reinforcements under the Duc de Vendôme were being hurried northwards. But they were still far from being reassured, and it was only when Guise, fresh from having delivered Burgundy and Champagne from the invader, made his appearance on the scene, declaring that he had come to save them or to perish with them, that their minds were relieved. The count, however, was not under the necessity of taking the field again, for Vendôme, having effected a junction with La Trémouille's troops, the Anglo-Flemish army, satisfied with the damage it had already committed, retreated without offering battle.

The dangers which threatened his realm had prevented the King from again leading his troops into Italy,

¹ Bouillé.

where Bonnivet, to whom the command had been entrusted, proved no match for the ex-Constable and the Imperialist generals. By the end of the spring of 1524 his army had been driven in confusion across the Sesia; the last French garrisons in Lombardy had capitulated, and not a rod of Italian soil remained to François I. At the beginning of July, the Imperialists invaded Provence, and, after reducing Aix and several other towns, laid siege to Marseilles. But the Marseillais offered an heroic defence, and, towards the end of September, the investing army, threatened by the advance of a formidable force which the King had assembled at Avignon, raised the siege and retreated into Italy.

Had François I listened to the counsels of prudence, he would, now that his kingdom had been freed from the enemy, have contented himself with strengthening its defences against further invasion. But, finding himself at the head of a considerable army, he was unable to resist the temptation of carrying the war beyond the Alps and of avenging in person the treason of Bourbon, the defeat of Bonnivet, and the devastation of Provence. All his nobles, all the best captains whom France possessed, eager to distinguish themselves before their Sovereign's eyes, demanded permission to accompany him. But, either because the King judged it advisable to leave at least one capable general behind him, or because Guise considered that the command of the *landsknechts* would be beneath the dignity of one who had so lately distinguished himself as a cavalry leader, the count remained in France, and the post which he had occupied in the campaign of Marignano, ten years before, was given to his youngest brother, François de Lorraine, Comte de Lambesc.

This wonderful foresight, or singular piece of good fortune, not only saved Guise from being involved in the terrible *débâcle* of Pavia (February 24, 1525), but decided that, when the news arrived that the King was

a prisoner and all the chivalry of France slain or taken,¹ he should be the only chief capable of inspiring confidence and of defending the kingdom during the captivity of François I.

¹ Among the slain was the young Comte de Lambesc, who shared the command of the *landsknechts* with Richard de la Pole, the attainted Duke of Suffolk. "*Rose blanche*," as the French called the duke, to distinguish him from Charles Brandon, the second husband of Mary Tudor, upon whom his title and estates had been conferred by Henry VIII, was also killed.

CHAPTER III

Perilous situation of France after Pavia—Guise persuades his brother-in-law, the Duc de Vendôme, to submit to the authority of Louise of Savoy—He becomes the most important personage of the Regency—Revolt of the peasants in the German provinces bordering the Rhine—Alsace and Lorraine threatened by them—Guise, on his own responsibility, leads the troops placed under his command against the insurgents and entirely routs them—His conduct severely censured by the Regent and the Council, but praised by the Parlement of Paris and the Pope—François I, on his return from captivity, creates Guise duke and peer—Remonstrances of the Parlement—Rapacity of Guise—He becomes the head of a party at the Court—The King discards his mistress, Madame de Chateaubriand, in favour of Anne de Pisseleu, demoiselle d'Heilly—Influence exercised by women in affairs—Amours of Guise—The Cardinal Jean de Lorraine—His portrait by Brantôme—His insolence to Beatrix of Portugal, Duchess of Savoy—His services to his elder brother, the Duc de Guise—Peace of Cambrai—Death of Louis de Lorraine, Comte de Vaudémont.

LOUISE OF SAVOY, whom the King, before his departure for Italy, had appointed Regent, found herself confronted with a task which, at first sight, might well have seemed overwhelming. It was no longer a question of conquering the Milanese, but of defending Burgundy and Provence, of preserving France from dismemberment at the hands of her victorious enemies. The Treasury was almost empty, the troops who ought to have been retained for defence against foreign aggression destroyed or dispersed, the best generals dead or in captivity, the people impoverished and discontented. Never since the time of Jeanne d'Arc had the country been in so perilous a situation.

However, the Regent, with all her faults and her vices, did not lack either courage or capacity, and she took immediate steps to meet the danger, by summoning to her aid the men most capable of assisting her to face it. A council of notables was convened at Lyons, at the head of whom were the Duc de Vendôme, the

Maréchal de Lautrec, and the Comte de Guise, to decide upon the measures which ought to be adopted. Of these three personages, Guise was the one upon whom Louise of Savoy placed the most reliance, and she confided to him her suspicions of Vendôme, who, urged on by the leaders of the Parlement of Paris, which had protested vigorously against the powers which François I had conferred upon his mother, contemplated seizing the Regency, as first Prince of the Blood. Guise, in consequence, had an interview with his brother-in-law, and represented to him so strongly the obligation of sacrificing his ambitions to his duty, that the duke promised to submit to the authority of the Regent and content himself with the title of Chief of the Council.

Guise soon became the most important person of the Regency, and it must be admitted that the influence which he exercised at this critical period was, on the whole, a very salutary one, and the advice he gave generally sound, notably that which he tendered in regard to the prisoners made by the enemy at Pavia, whom he urged ought to be ransomed at any cost, notwithstanding the impoverished condition of the finances, as, when the very existence of France was at stake, no price was too high to pay for the services of seasoned warriors. In one important matter, however, he committed a most grave error, and one which might have entailed disastrous consequences, if the marvellous good fortune which attended him throughout life had happened for once to fail him.

While the Regent was negotiating with Henry VIII of England, in the hope of detaching him from the Emperor, concerning whose ambitious designs the English monarch was becoming daily more suspicious, tumultuous bands of armed peasants, professing the Lutheran doctrines, arose in the German provinces bordering the Rhine and called upon those of Alsace and Lorraine to shake off the yoke of their lords and form with them a sort of communistic federation. The desire for pillage

seems to have been their chief inspiration, and, under the pretext of restoring the apostolic practice of community of goods, they sacked and burned châteaux and isolated houses, murdered priests, women and children, and committed all manner of atrocities.

After carrying fire and sword through Suabia, Würtemberg, and Franconia, they crossed the Rhine, near Strasbourg, with the intention of ravaging Lorraine and Alsace. Their numbers increased as they advanced, and by the time they reached Saverne, which they had fixed upon as a convenient centre for their depredations, had risen to nearly 40,000 men.

The Regent had, with infinite difficulty, assembled at Lyons a force of some 6,000 men, and had placed it under the orders of Guise. It was a last resource against the invasion of the Imperialists, which was then considered imminent. But Duke Antoine, in great alarm at the danger which threatened his dominions, wrote to his brother imploring him to come to his aid; and Guise did not hesitate to betray his trust and to risk this little army, and with it the safety of France, in the interests of the Lorraine princes.

Without asking permission of the Regent, without even warning her of his intention, he quitted Lyons and marched in all haste towards the Rhine. On the way, he was joined by his brothers, the Duke of Lorraine and the Comte de Vaudémont, and the three princes visited their mother in her convent at Pont-à-Mousson, to recommend themselves to her prayers. The Duchess-dowager gave them her blessing, and exhorted them to fight, "*sans tarder, sans fléchir, pour la gloire de Dieu.*"

Guise, in the hope of avoiding an engagement, sent an envoy to the insurgents, to urge them to disperse and return to their homes. The latter, confident in their superior numbers, put the envoy to death, upon which the count attacked them and routed them with terrible slaughter. A single victory, however, did not suffice to extinguish the revolt, for a second army of

peasants had just crossed the Rhine, and encamped in a valley near Schlestadt. Their position was a very strong one, since the nature of the ground rendered it difficult for cavalry to act, and it was, besides, defended by cannon. But Guise attacked them by night, when their unskilfully served artillery was practically useless, and gained a complete victory. In this engagement, the young Comte de Vaudémont greatly distinguished himself by his dashing courage.

The Regent and the Council were highly indignant that Guise had, without their authority, rashly exposed the only body of regular troops capable of resisting a possible invasion of the Imperialists, and severely censured his conduct. But Guise could well afford to ignore these strictures. He had saved Lorraine and Alsace from devastation; he was victorious at the moment when all the other French generals could reckon nothing but defeats; and he was able to pose as the defender of established order and the Catholic religion against bandits and heretics. The Parlement of Paris sent him their felicitations on this victory, which, it declared, "would assure him an immortal renown." Pope Clement VII despatched letters in the same strain both to him and to the Comte de Vaudémont; and so great was the reputation which he acquired, not only in France but in all Christendom, that when, in March 1526, François I returned from captivity, he decided that he ought to treat him as a Prince of the Blood, and conferred upon him the rank of duke and peer of France, which as yet belonged to only three princes: the Ducs de Nemours (created 1507), de Longueville (created 1510), and de Vendôme (created 1514).

It was the first time that any one not of the royal blood had been elevated, by the will of the monarch, to this rank,¹ and invested with the same rights and privi-

¹ It is true that, in 1519, Claude Gouffier had been created duke and peer, with the title of Duc de Roannois; but he died on the same day on which his elevation was announced, and before the letters-patent had been submitted to the Parlement for registration.

leges as the six symbolical peers represented in the ceremonies of the *Sacre* at Rheims : " Burgundy, Normandy, Guienne, Toulouse, Flanders, and Champagne," whom the letters-patent had been careful to specify ; and the astonishment which the King's action aroused was increased when, in erecting the county of Guise into a duchy, François incorporated in it several adjoining estates, forming part of the demesne of the Crown, " in order that the said county might be the better able to support the name and dignity of duchy."

The Parlement of Paris, though its halls had but lately rung with the praises of Guise, was indignant at the enormity of this double innovation, and addressed to the King a vigorous remonstrance on the subject. The King replied, ordering it to register the letters-patent, and pointing out that the services which the Comte de Guise had rendered the State and Christendom justified this new departure. Nevertheless, the Parlement declined to obey the royal mandate, save on the condition that the duchy-peerage should become extinct, in the event of default of heirs male.

As for the new duke, so far from being content with the signal honours and benefits which had just been conferred upon him, he was not ashamed to solicit from the King, a little while afterwards, the emoluments of the record-office of Toulouse, which were duly accorded him. It would appear to have been a point of honour with this acquisitive nobleman to despise no gain, however insignificant it might happen to be, and that he considered the day as wasted which did not add to the riches of his family.

Cold, calculating men like Claude de Lorraine, whose every action is dictated by a nice regard for their private interests, never lack adherents. People espouse their cause through faith in their success, knowing well that they are never likely to be ruined by the errors into which devotion or enthusiasm may lead others. Thus it was that Guise became the natural chief of all those who

admired the constancy of his good fortune in the midst of the disgraces of his equals at the Court, or who feared to attach themselves to the uncertain fortune of the favourites.

Of how uncertain that fortune was the Court had just had a signal demonstration. On his restoration to his kingdom, François I had completely and almost brutally discarded his mistress, Madame de Chateaubriand, in favour of Anne de Pisseleu, demoiselle d'Heilly, a pretty and vivacious blonde, whom Louise of Savoy, long jealous of the old mistress's influence over her son, is said to have thrown in his way. At the bidding of his new enchantress, he had even gone so far as to demand back from the dethroned sultana the jewels that he had given her in the days of her favour. When a mistress fell, her friends and *protégés* not infrequently shared her disgrace, and those who had identified themselves too closely with the interests of Madame de Chateaubriand trembled lest they should come under the ban of her successor.

The Duc de Guise did not fail to appreciate the immense influence exercised by women in affairs of State. He had seen the Connétable de Bourbon driven into treason and exile, and the honest Semblançay, the Surintendant des Finances, brought to the scaffold, by the machinations of Louise of Savoy; he had seen Lautrec and his two brothers appointed to high military commands for which they were quite unfitted by the influence of their sister, Madame de Chateaubriand; he had seen Reformers secured from the clutches of the Parlement and the Sorbonne through the intervention of the King's sister, the gentle and intellectual Marguerite d'Angoulême. Guise, however, held very much aloof from the feminine portion of the Court. It was certainly not from any austerity of morals, as, notwithstanding his undoubted affection for his wife, he was very far from being a faithful husband; but he preferred to confine his gallantries to his governments

of Burgundy and Champagne and to beauties of inferior station in life,¹ and to leave the task of paying court to those high-born dames whose good-will was considered indispensable to maintain the credit of the family to his third brother, "the very great, very magnificent, and very liberal Cardinal de Lorraine."

The splendid appanage which Duke René II had bequeathed to his second son had not in any way prejudiced the fortune of Jean de Lorraine, who, at the tender age of three, had been appointed coadjutor to the Bishop of Metz, a post which, seven years later, he exchanged for the bishopric itself. In 1518, at the age of twenty, on the nomination of François I, the Pope created him a cardinal, which exalted position, he considered, justified him in annexing the revenues of all the

¹ A daughter of the Président des Barres at Dijon was for some years the duke's mistress, and some chroniclers believe that this lady was the mother of Guise's natural son, Claude de Guise, Abbé de Cluny, who took a prominent part in the Massacre of St. Bartholomew, was suspected of having poisoned his half-brother, the second Cardinal de Lorraine, and died in 1612, after a scandalous life. Others, however, assert that this singular ecclesiastic was the fruit of a *liaison* with a woman whose name history has not preserved, who divided her favours between her ducal admirer and a groom, nephew of the public executioner of Langres.

A third amour, with a peasant girl in the environs of Joinville, was, according to an historian of that town, cited in the article on Claude de Lorraine in the *Biographie Générale*, responsible for the erection of the charming pleasure-house known as the Château du Grand Jardin, adjoining the Botanical Garden at Joinville. On the door is engraved the date 1545, and on the pilasters may be read the mottoes: TOUTES POVR VNE—LA ET NON PLUS; while on the façade are carved the letters C. A.—the initials of Claude and Antoinette. Here is the supposed origin of these devices:—

"Claude de Lorraine, although married to Antoinette de Bourbon, had remarked, in the barony of Joinville, a humble beauty, whom he visited in secret, and in whose society he forgot the luxury of his palace and the exalted rank of his spouse. The latter did not fail to discover her husband's frailty, and resolved to make him repent of it; but a noble heart cannot have recourse save to a generous revenge. The young girl was poor, simple in her dress, and modestly lodged. The duchess changed on a sudden all this poverty into wealth, and, unknown to her husband, sent her rival dazzling toilettes and sumptuous furniture. Touched by this action, Claude de Lorraine abjured, it is said, his errors, and resolved to be henceforth a model of conjugal fidelity. In memory of this determination, he caused the Château du Grand Jardin to be built, on the walls of which were engraved, by his order, the mottoes: TOUTES POVR VNE, in allusion to the promise he had given, and LA ET NON PLUS, indicating that a pastoral repose was henceforth to be his only pleasure."



ANTOINETTE DE BOURBON, DUCHESSE DE GUISE.

wealthy dioceses and fat abbeys which happened to fall vacant. About the same epoch, in England, Cardinal Wolsey was Archbishop of York, Bishop of Bath, Winchester, and Durham, and Abbot of St. Albans; but, as a successful pluralist, he will not bear comparison with his colleague in the Sacred College, who contrived to gather into his rapacious hands three archbishoprics: those of Rheims, Lyons, and Narbonne; nine bishoprics: Metz, Toul, Verdun, Théroutenne, Luçon, Albi, Valence, Nantes, and Agen; and five abbeys: Cluny, Marmoutiers, Saint-Ouen, Gorze, and Fécamp.

As prodigal as his brother was close-fisted, the Cardinal did not hoard his immense ecclesiastical revenues, but squandered them in the most reckless manner in extravagant fêtes at his hôtel in Paris, the Hôtel de Cluny, in almsgiving, and in purchasing the favours of ladies upon whom he had cast a favourable eye. Brantôme has drawn of him a lively, if somewhat exaggerated, portrait.

“He usually carried about with him,” he writes, “a large wallet, which his *valet de chambre*, who kept the money for his little pleasures, never failed to fill every morning with three or four hundred écus; and, whenever he met a poor person, he would put his hand into this wallet and give him whatever he happened to draw out, without troubling to count it. Once, when he was walking in Rome, a poor blind man asked alms of him, and he gave him, according to his custom, a great handful of gold, upon which the blind man cried out in Italian: ‘*O tu sei Christo, o veramenta il cardinal di Lorrena!*’ (You must be Christ, or surely the Cardinal de Lorraine!)

“If he were generous and charitable in this respect, he was equally generous towards other persons, and principally in the matter of the ladies, whom he entrapped easily by means of this bait; for money was not so abundant in those times as it is to-day, while women were more expensively and magnificently attired.

“ I have heard tell that when there arrived at Court some pretty girl or new matron who was beautiful, he would at once accost her, and, while conversing with her, would say that he wished to train her himself. What a trainer! I believe that it was not so difficult a matter as to train some savage colt. Further, at that time, it was said that there was scarcely a married woman or girl resident at the Court, or newly arrived, who had not been debauched or ensnared by her avarice or by the liberality of the said cardinal; and few or none emerged from that Court honest girls or women. Also one used to see at that time their coffers and spacious wardrobes more full of gowns and petticoats and gold and silver and silk than are those of queens and great princesses to-day. I have myself seen this in the case of two or three women, who had gained all by their charms; for their fathers, mothers, and husbands could not have given them in such great abundance.

“ I should have done well, some one may say, to have refrained from speaking thus of this great cardinal, in view of his honourable gown and most reverend estate; but his King wished it and took pleasure in it, and to pleasure his King all things are permitted to one, whether it be to make love or other things, so long as they be not evil. Further, he was a man of flesh and blood like any other, and he had several great virtues and perfections which obscured this little imperfection, if love-making ought to be called an imperfection.”

His Eminence's successes with the venal beauties of the Court could scarcely have been calculated to inspire him with a very high opinion of women, and, though the chronicler assures us that ordinarily he treated them very courteously, on one occasion he forgot his manners and conducted himself towards a very great lady indeed with a rudeness which would have been unpardonable in a captain of *condottieri*, to say nothing of a prince of the Church :—

"Once, while passing through Piedmont, on his way to Rome, on the service of the King his master, he visited the Duke and Duchess of Savoy.¹ After conversing a sufficient time with the duke, he repaired to the chamber of the duchess, to salute her; but when he approached her, she, who was the most haughty person in the world, offered him her hand to kiss. The cardinal, impatient at this affront,² approached to kiss her on the mouth, and, as he did so, she drew back. He, losing patience, and this time drawing still nearer, caught her by the head, and, despite her resistance, kissed her two or three times. And, although she uttered cries and exclamations in Portuguese and Spanish, she was obliged to pardon it. 'Why,' said he, 'do you consider that you ought to treat me in this fashion? I kiss the Queen, my mistress, who is the greatest queen in the world, and yet, you I may not kiss—you, who are only a wretched little duchess! And, if you like, you may know that I have passed the night with ladies as beautiful as you are, and of as good, and even of a greater family, than you!'

"Possibly," adds Brantôme, "he may have spoken the truth. This princess did wrong to treat thus haughtily a prince of so great a House and a cardinal to boot, for there is no cardinal, having regard to the great position they hold in the Church, who is not comparable to the greatest prince of Christendom. But the cardinal likewise did wrong to have recourse to so harsh a revenge, although it is very mortifying to a noble and generous heart, no matter of what profession, to endure an affront."

This epicurean and prodigal prelate, so different from his brother Claude, was a very valuable ally to the latter in his unceasing efforts to push the fortunes of his family. His liberality attracted partisans; his

¹ Charles III and Beatrix of Portugal.

² According to etiquette, the Duchess should have offered the cardinal her cheek.

gallantries assured the all-powerful support of the ladies of the Court ; his generous and not indiscriminating patronage of literature and art rallied to the Guises the little world of poets and artists. "He cast a kind of splendour over those rising fortunes which his brother's greed would have dimmed."¹

Meanwhile, the refusal of François I to execute the terms of the Treaty of Madrid, by which his liberty had been purchased, had led to a renewal of the war. While Lautrec, at the head of an army of 30,000 men, raised and equipped chiefly by English gold—since Henry VIII had decided that the time had come for him to change sides—invaded Lombardy, to Guise fell the task of defending the eastern frontier. It was perhaps well for him that the Imperialists did not attempt any aggressive movement in that direction, since he received no money to pay the *landsknechts* whom he had raised, and appears to have been in momentary fear of their deserting *en masse* to the enemy. "The captains have warned me," he writes to the King, "that they will be obliged to take the side of the Emperor." However, he contrived to prevent this catastrophe, and in August 1529 the Peace of Cambrai, known as "*la Paix des Dames*," negotiated by Louise of Savoy and Margaret of Austria, the Emperor's aunt, put an end to hostilities. François I recovered his two elder sons, the Dauphin and the Duc d'Orléans, given as hostages for the execution of the Treaty of Madrid, and preserved Burgundy, which had been ceded to the Emperor by that treaty ; but he was obliged to pay the sum of 1,200,000 crowns for the ransom of the French princes, to renounce his claims on the Milanese and to sovereignty over Flanders and Artois, and to wed Charles V's widowed sister, Eleanor, Queen-dowager of Portugal, as a pledge of reconciliation.

The war in Italy had deprived Guise of yet another

¹ M. Henri Forneron, *les Ducs de Guise et leur époque*.

of his younger brothers. In the summer of the previous year, the Comte de Vaudémont had died of plague, or, more probably, of typhus, before the walls of Naples, which Lautrec, who subsequently succumbed himself to the same disease, was then besieging.¹ The deceased prince had been a singularly handsome young man, and celebrated for his skill in the use of arms and his daring courage in the field, and his early death appears to have been a great grief to Guise, who was warmly attached to him. Of the six sons of Duke René II, only the three elder now remained.

¹ The heart of the Comte de Vaudémont was brought back to France and interred in the church of the Couvent de Sainte-Claire at Pont-à-Mousson, to which his mother had retired.

CHAPTER IV

The Duc de Guise retires to his governments, where he lives like a petty sovereign—His children—Marriage of his eldest daughter, Marie de Lorraine, to Louis II, Duc de Longueville—Dearth in France—Progress of Reform: rigorous measures adopted by Guise against the Reformers under his jurisdiction—Beginning of the second war between François I and Charles V—Guise charged with the defence of Paris—The duke's eldest son, François de Lorraine, Comte d'Aumale, accompanies his father to the wars—Interview between François I and the two princes—Clever stratagem by which Guise relieves Péronne, besieged by the Imperialists—Truce of Nice—Death of the Duc de Longueville, husband of Marie de Lorraine—Rivalry between James V of Scotland and Henry VIII of England for the hand of the widowed monarch—Pertinacity of the English monarch—Marriage of James V and Marie de Lorraine—Unsuccessful overture of Henry VIII for the hand of Marie's younger sister, Louise de Lorraine.

DURING the six years of peace which followed "*la Paix des Dames*," we hear comparatively little of the Duc de Guise. He assisted at the coronation of the new Queen in March 1531, on which occasion he held the Hand of Justice, and, at the royal dinner which followed the ceremony, served the King as Grand Cupbearer; but his visits to the Court appear to have been few and paid at long intervals. Court life, indeed, was but little to his taste, and, believing that his interests there were safe in the hands of the Cardinal de Lorraine, he preferred to live like a petty sovereign at Troyes or Dijon, or at Joinville or one of his other châteaux, occupying himself with the affairs of his governments, the management of his great estates, and the care of his numerous family. For the paternal instinct was very strongly developed in the House of Lorraine, and between 1515 and 1536, apart from the natural son of whom we have already spoken, the duke became the

father of twelve legitimate children, of whom all but two lived to grow up.¹

On August 4, 1534, the eldest of the family, Marie de Lorraine, a tall and handsome girl of eighteen, who had aroused general admiration when, "habited in a mantle and corsage of violet velvet and a surcoat of ermine enriched with jewels," she had made her first appearance in public three years before, on the occasion of Queen Eleanor's state entry into Paris, was married to Louis II, Duc de Longueville, Prince de Neufchâtel, and Grand Chamberlain of France, great-grandson of the celebrated Comte de Dunois—the "Bastard of Orléans"—natural son of Louis I, Duc d'Orléans. It was a good match for Marie de Lorraine, for, if the Duc de Longueville, who was her senior by some four years, was not quite her equal in point of birth, the great deeds of the heroic companion-in-arms of Jeanne d'Arc cast a kind of lustre over all his descendants, and he was, besides, one of the wealthiest nobles in France, having inherited immense estates in Normandy from his mother, Marie d'Harcourt. Unlike the great majority of marriages of the time, it would appear to have been largely one of inclination; for the young couple had met and been attracted towards one another at the time of Queen Eleanor's coronation, and, though

¹ Here is the list :

Marie, born November 22, 1515; married, in 1534, Louis II, Duc de Longueville, and, in 1538, James V of Scotland.

François, Comte d'Aumale, afterwards second Duc de Guise, born February 17, 1519.

Louise, born January 1520; married, first, René de Nassau, Prince of Orange, and, secondly, Charles de Cröy, Prince de Chimay, Duc d'Aerschot.

Renée, Abbess of Saint-Pierre de Reims, born September 1, 1522.

Charles, second Cardinal de Lorraine, born February 1524.

Claude, Marquis de Mayenne, afterwards Duc d'Aumale, born August 1526.

Louis, first Cardinal de Guise, born October 1527.

Antoinette, Abbess of Formoustier, born August 1531.

François, Grand Prior of France and General of the Galleys, born April 1535.

René, Marquis d'Elbeuf, born August 1536.

unfortunately their wedded life was very brief, it was singularly happy.

Guise's determination to do everything possible to ensure that his sons should have fortunes sufficient to enable them to maintain the dignity of their rank did not permit him to give his daughter a large dowry ; and Marie only received what, in view of her father's wealth, must be considered the very moderate one of 80,000 livres, payable in four annual instalments.¹

Notwithstanding that France was now experiencing an interval of peace, it was a sad time for the country. "From the end of the year 1528 to the beginning of the year 1534," writes Mézeray, "there was a perpetual disturbance of the seasons. . . . One did not experience two days of frost in succession. This warmth enervated nature. . . . The corn refused to ripen in the ground. . . . This dearth occasioned a general famine ; then came a malady that was called *trousse-galand*, and upon that a furious pestilence."

The disturbance was not less great in men's minds. Calvin was beginning to propagate his doctrines, making a schism within the schism, so to speak. At the same time, the number of French Lutherans was increasing, notwithstanding the persecution to which they were subjected. On all sides the old Catholic edifice in which the people had so long found shelter seemed to be tottering.

Both Guise and his wife showed themselves ardently opposed to the innovations, and brought up their family in the most rigid orthodoxy. In the districts over which he possessed jurisdiction, the duke did not hesitate, on occasion, to have recourse to those repressive measures which, however repugnant to modern ideas, were in the

¹ Dunois's nephew, Charles VII, gave him, in 1463, the county of Longueville, in the district of Caux, which had been ceded to Charles VI by Bertrand du Guesclin, half a century earlier. Dunois's grandson, François, was created duke and peer by Louis XII in 1510, and in 1571 his descendant Léonor received from Charles IX, for himself and his descendants, the title of Princes of the Blood.

sixteenth century deemed both just and necessary, and which the adherents of Protestantism were not slow to adopt themselves in countries where their cause had triumphed. "As for the rumour which, you say, is great in Champagne concerning this mischievous sect of heretics," he writes to Anne de Montmorency, "I shall inform you again that I intend to keep such good order there that God, the King and the world ought to be content with it."

But the disastrous epoch of the Wars of Religion had not yet arrived. The struggle which for the time being demanded the blood and treasure of the nation was one, not of rival faiths, but of rival dynasties. For, early in 1536, the embers of the war which had closed with the Peace of Cambrai, after smouldering for six years, were fanned into a fresh blaze.

After some brief successes beyond the Alps, François found himself once more constrained to act on the defensive. In July, the Emperor invaded Provence at the head of 50,000 men, while almost simultaneously another Imperial army, under the Comtes de Nassau and de Rieux, invaded Picardy from the Netherlands. Thus, France was assailed on both north and south.

The King entrusted the defence of Provence to Anne de Montmorency, who, after ruthlessly laying waste the country in order to arrest the march of the invader, seized Avignon, in spite of the protests of the Vice-Legate, who commanded for the Pope in the Venaissin, and formed an entrenched camp between the Durance and the Rhone; Vendôme and the Maréchal de Fleuranges commanded the troops in Picardy; Guise was charged with the protection of the capital, where he took up his residence.

Before proceeding to Paris, the duke visited François I at Lyons, where the Court had been residing since the outbreak of war, taking with him his eldest son, the Comte d'Aumale, a tall, fair-haired lad, now in his

eighteenth year, who was "dressed in a splendid suit of armour, with a sword by his side," and informed his Majesty that "he should demand of Heaven for his son the singular protection which had been extended to himself in the execution of the orders of the King, and that contempt of death in the service of the Crown which ought to be the appanage of the Guises." The King's reply, we are told, seemed to predict the future glory of "Monsieur de Guise le Grand," and, at parting, he "with extreme graciousness embraced the two princes and advised the Comte d'Aumale to imitate his father, since that was the best means to become a great captain."¹

The devastation of Provence proved an effective obstacle to the success of the invaders in the South, and in September Charles V, finding his army wasting away from famine and disease, was obliged to retreat into Italy; but, in the North, the Imperialists were more successful, and, after taking and sacking the town and château of Guise, they invested Péronne, thirty leagues from Paris, into which the Maréchal de Fleuranges had thrown himself. Paris was in consternation, for it was known that Péronne had but a weak garrison and that there was very little powder in the place, and, if it fell, the road to the capital would lie open.

Guise, indignant at the destruction of his property and at the affront offered to his ducal estate, and warned by a messenger from Fleuranges, who had contrived to make his way through the enemy's lines, that the garrison had practically exhausted their ammunition, resolved to make an attempt to relieve Péronne. Leaving Paris with a body of 200 cavalry, provided with numerous drums and trumpets, and 400 arquebusiers, each of whom carried a sack containing 10 lb. of powder, he approached the town under cover of night. He then ordered the cavalry to disperse to various points on one side of the place, and, at a given signal, to begin to beat their drums

¹ Fournier.

and sound their trumpets, so as to attract the attention of the enemy in that direction.

This clever stratagem was completely successful. The besiegers, under the impression that they were about to be assailed by a considerable force, rushed to arms and ranged themselves in order of battle on the side of the town from which they expected the attack; while Guise's arquebusiers, guided by the soldier whom Fleuranges had despatched to Paris, crossed the marshes on the opposite side and reached the walls in safety.

When day broke, the discomfited Imperialists perceived the last of the arquebusiers and their sacks of powder being hauled over the ramparts, and Guise and his little body of cavalry, whom their alarm had magnified into a formidable army, retiring in the direction of Paris. They thereupon decided to raise the siege; but, before retiring, they made an attempt to burn the town, by throwing into it "a great quantity of fireworks." Fire broke out in several places, "but," writes Fournier, "Heaven, which seemed to take pleasure in seconding all the designs of the Duc de Guise, performed immediately a species of miracle. . . . On a sudden, there fell so astonishing a deluge of rain that it extinguished the conflagration, and afterwards nearly drowned in their entrenchments those who had caused it. This prodigy opened the eyes of the incendiaries. . . . God was declaring Himself visibly against the enterprises of their Emperor."

The success of Guise's *coup de main* caused great enthusiasm among the Parisians. They forgot the credit due to Fleuranges, who had held out most heroically for a month against great odds, to magnify the exploit of the duke, whom they hailed as their saviour and the favourite of Heaven.

Having thus enhanced his already great popularity with the Parisians, Guise returned to Champagne to resume his favourite system of irregular warfare. He now felt himself so independent in his governments of

Champagne and Burgundy that, when Montmorency instructed him to send him some pieces of artillery which were at Troyes, he refused, and a letter from the King was necessary to recall him to his duty ; while, at Rheims, he gave the canons of the cathedral permission to infringe certain royal ordinances binding upon clergy and laity alike, and was summoned before the Parlement of Paris to answer for his conduct.

The war in the North continued in desultory fashion until the summer of 1537, when an armistice was concluded, so far as regarded that centre of hostilities. In the early autumn, a French army again crossed the Alps and overran the greater part of the dominions of the unfortunate Charles III of Savoy, now in alliance with the Emperor. At this juncture, Pope Paul III, anxious to unite Christendom against the ever-increasing menace of the Turk, intervened with an offer of mediation ; and in the following June a ten years' truce was concluded at Nice, by which François I and the Emperor each preserved the territory occupied by his troops at the moment of its signature.

A few weeks before the Truce of Nice, the Duc de Guise had the satisfaction of becoming the father-in-law of a King.

On June 9, 1537, the Duc de Longueville died at Rouen, and, at the age of twenty-one, Marie de Lorraine found herself a widow, with a son a few months old. She was again enceinte at the time, but long before her second son, who died shortly after his birth, was born a suitor for her hand presented himself.

This suitor was none other than James V of Scotland, who, in 1536, had married Madame Madeleine de France, the eldest daughter of François I, only to lose his bride within six weeks of her landing at Leith. The necessity of assuring the succession to his throne made it imperative that James should find another wife without delay, and, being desirous of continuing the French connection,

he decided to demand the hand of the widowed Duchesse de Longueville. "Her," writes Drummond of Hawthornden, "he thinketh for her stern, healthful complexion, and fertility—for she hath been a mother—worthy of his love, and, to try her affection towards himself, he directed David Beton and the Lord Maxwell to negotiate the marriage."

James's Ambassadors met with a very favourable reception at the Court of France, and François I expressed his hearty approbation of the match, at the same time undertaking to remove any objections which Madame de Longueville might be disposed to entertain about taking to herself a second husband so soon after the demise of the first. But, notwithstanding the representations of his Majesty, which appear to have been warmly seconded by her parents, whose pride was naturally highly flattered by the prospect of their daughter becoming a queen, some months elapsed before the widowed duchess could be brought to consent to this arrangement. François, however, treated her very natural reluctance as a mere caprice, and proceeded to give her the rank of an adopted Daughter of France, in order to render her a more suitable bride for his royal son-in-law.

Meantime, another kingly suitor had entered the field. On October 24, 1537, Henry VIII's third wife, Jane Seymour, who twelve days before had given birth to the future Edward VI, died at Hampton Court; and the bereaved monarch lost no time in looking about him for a fourth consort. In the course of an interview with the French Ambassador, he informed him that he had a mind to bestow his hand upon one of his Excellency's fair countrywomen, provided that a lady of sufficiently high degree and sufficient personal attractions could be found. Châtillon hastened to acquaint his master with the royal widower's desire, and François I courteously replied that "there was not a maid or widow of suitable degree in France who should not be

at the King's service." Henry thereupon suggested that a bevy of the fairest and noblest widows and damsels in France should be despatched to Calais or Boulogne, that he might inspect them there and make his selection.

To this cool proposal François demurred, but instructed his Ambassador to assure the King of England that, if he would name any particular lady, she should be guaranteed him. Upon this, Henry, though well aware of the position in regard to his nephew, James V, informed Châtillon that his choice had fallen upon the widowed Duchesse de Longueville.

The Ambassador reminded him that the lady was already promised to the King of Scotland; but Henry rejoined, with significant emphasis: "*She* has not promised yet." An observation which indicated that he was perfectly informed concerning the fair widow's reluctance to enter into a second matrimonial alliance.

He then insisted that Châtillon should communicate his decision to François I, adding that, if that prince would promote his suit, he would do twice as much for him as the King of Scots could do. But the French King, though very anxious to do all in his power to propitiate the monarch who held the scales between him and the Emperor, expressed his regret that the match was impossible.

"How!" cried Henry, with a fine show of indignation, to Châtillon. "Did not your master say that there was not a maid or widow of any degree in France who should not be at my service?"

"Would you marry the wife of another?" objected the Ambassador.

"She is not his wife yet," returned the King, and he declared his intention of persevering in his suit.

It is more than a little doubtful whether Henry was really so anxious to wed Marie de Lorraine as he represented himself to be; indeed, Professor Gairdner¹ is of opinion that, both in the case of that princess and

¹ See his article on Henry VIII in the "Dictionary of National Biography."

subsequently in that of Christina, Duchess of Milan, whose portrait he commissioned Holbein to paint, he was merely acting a part, with the object of preserving the balance of power between the two rivals, Charles V and François I, lest they should combine with the Pope against him.

If Henry really were acting, it must be admitted that, in regard to Marie de Lorraine, he must have acted most uncommonly well, for Châtillon was convinced that he was quite infatuated with the lady, of whose attractions of mind and person he appears to have received a most glowing account from Wallop, one of his envoys at the French Court. "He [Henry VIII] is so enamoured of Madame de Longueville," he writes, "that he is continually recurring to the matter; I have told him that she is affianced to the King of Scotland; but he declines to believe it. He says that he requires such a queen as she would make, that he admires a tall woman, and wishes for her in particular."

In a subsequent despatch, the Ambassador writes that the King has spoken to him of the gentle disposition of the Duchesse de Longueville, and that he had heard that she had been both a loving and a dutiful wife to her late husband; and had also expressed the opinion that she was likely to bear him male children, since she had borne two sons to the Duc de Longueville.

Persisting in his determination, real or pretended, to supplant his nephew, towards the end of 1537 Henry addressed a proposal in due form to the lady herself, who replied that "while sensible of the great honour he wished to confer upon her, she was so much absorbed in grief for her husband that she had resolved never to take another, but to devote her life to his memory and to the care and education of their children." As, however, the duchess had said nothing about a betrothal to the rival royal suitor, the English King was far from being discouraged by the rejection of his suit, and

attributed it merely to coyness or a sort of ceremonial devotion to the memory of the deceased duke, which would soon yield to the temptation of sharing a throne.

In point of fact, at the beginning of the following year, Marie de Lorraine did announce her willingness to share a throne, but it was that of Scotland, her reluctance to enter into a second marriage having been in all probability overcome by the fear that, unless she hastened to submit to her Sovereign's will in regard to James V, some change in the political situation might cause her to be consigned as a State victim to the monarch who had already divorced one consort and decapitated another. Despite, however, of the public announcement of her betrothal to his nephew, Henry continued to demand her "with the pertinacity of a spoilt child,"¹ and even threatened hostilities with France, in revenge for what he called the affront put upon him by François I, who, after promising him the hand of any lady in his dominions, had refused him the one upon whom his choice had fallen. In vain, Châtillon endeavoured to propitiate him by suggesting that he should console himself with some other French princess. First, he proposed Madame Marguerite, François I's remaining daughter, who subsequently married Emmanuel Philibert, Duke of Savoy, but her his Majesty peevishly rejected, as being far too young. Then, the Duchesse de Longueville's younger sister, Louise de Lorraine, whom he assured the King was far more beautiful than the future Queen of Scotland; but her, too, the monarch refused to consider. Finally, he was indiscreet enough to mention Marie de Vendôme, whom, four years previously, James V had somewhat ungallantly thrown over in favour of Madame Madeleine, whereupon Henry flew into a violent rage and exclaimed, with characteristic brutality, that "he would have none of the King of Scots' leavings."

The marriage of James V and Marie de Lorraine was

¹ Strickland, *Lives of the Queens of Scotland*.

celebrated at Châteaudun on May 9, 1538, Lord Maxwell acting as proxy for his Sovereign. The bride received a dowry of 150,000 livres tournois, to which François I and the Duc de Guise contributed in equal shares, it being stipulated that, if she survived the King, one-third of that sum should be repaid her, if she had borne him children, and half, if there were no issue of the marriage. James gave her, as an appanage, the county of Fife, with Falkland Palace as a residence; while, in the event of her widowhood, she was to enjoy the revenues of the county of Strathearn and the lordships of Galloway, Orkney, and the Isles, with the palaces of Sterling and Dingwall as residences.

A few days later, Marie embarked at Le Havre and sailed for Scotland. Permission had been solicited of Henry VIII for the bride to land at some spot on the English coast, in case of rough weather being encountered, but the disappointed suitor most ungraciously refused this request.

Some months later, after the Truce of Nice had been signed and that meeting between François I and Charles V which so astonished Europe had taken place at Aigues-Mortes, Henry VIII, anxious to divide if possible the recently reconciled rivals, repented of having so hastily refused the hand of Louise de Lorraine, and, according to Fournier, "despatched incontinently the Milord Briant [*sic*] to the King and to the Duc [de Guise], to demand this young daughter in marriage . . . with the order to promise the King more expressly that, if she were accorded him, he would break for ever with the Emperor." But François I, with the bait of the Milanese dangling before his covetous eyes, was reluctant to offend Charles V; while the Duc de Guise was not without hope that, if the marriage between the Dauphin and Catherine de' Medici, who after six years of wedded life was still childless, were to be annulled, Louise de Lorraine might step into the young Florentine's shoes and eventually become Queen of France. Perhaps, too

Guise, always an affectionate father, hesitated to deliver his daughter to the caprices of the English monarch ; while he was aware that the rôle which he had assumed as one of the champions of Catholicism could not fail to be prejudiced by a matrimonial alliance between his House and a Sovereign who had openly rejected the authority of the Holy See. And so nothing came of the matter.

CHAPTER V

Death of the Dauphin François—Henry, duc d'Orléans becomes heir to the throne—His marriage to Catherine de' Medici—Beginning of the *liaison* between the new Dauphin and Diane de Poitiers—Antagonism between Diane and the King's mistress, the Duchesse d'Étampes—The Cardinal de Lorraine and three elder sons of the Duc de Guise pay court to the favourite of the Dauphin—Anne de Montmorency—His character and policy—The Duc de Guise endeavours, but without success, to persuade François I to accept the overtures of the rebellious citizens of Ghent—The King allows himself to be duped by the Emperor—Disgrace of the Constable Montmorency—François I declares war against the Emperor—Guise and the Duc d'Orléans invade Luxembourg—The success of the campaign compromised by the folly and egotism of the young prince and his friends—The Duc d'Aumale wounded before Luxembourg—A Spartan sire.

IN the meantime, great changes had been taking place at the Court. In August 1536, the Dauphin François, the eldest of the Kings' three sons, while on his way to join his father at Montmorency's camp at Avignon, had died after an illness of four days. Modern historians agree in ascribing the death of the young prince to an attack of pleurisy, occasioned by his imprudence in drinking a copious draught of cold water when overheated by playing tennis. But the ignorant physicians who attended him were unanimously of opinion that he had been poisoned; and an Italian gentleman of his household was arrested, brought to trial, and condemned to the barbarous punishment reserved for regicides.

The untimely death of the Dauphin François, which was the more regrettable since he had given every promise of one day making an excellent King, left the King's second son, Henri, Duc d'Orléans, an awkward, taciturn, unsociable lad of eighteen, heir to the throne. In November 1533, François I, with the idea of binding the shifty Pontiff, Clement VII, to his interests, had

married the Duc d'Orléans to the Pope's cousin—or niece, as his Holiness preferred to call her—Catherine de' Medici, daughter of Lorenzo de' Medici, Duke of Urbino, and Madeleine de la Tour d'Auvergne. The marriage was extremely unpopular with both Court and people. The former looked upon it as a *mésalliance*; the latter, mindful of the intolerable burdens which the King's Italian enterprises had entailed, regarded the Papal connection as the forerunner of further ruinous wars and did not conceal their resentment. Nor did François reap thereby any of the political advantages upon which he had counted, as, towards the end of the following year, Clement VII's career of duplicity and prevarication was cut short by death. As for Catherine, who was at this time a plain, unformed girl of fifteen, she failed entirely to gain the affection of the morose, tongue-tied youth to whom she was mated, who resisted all her efforts to draw him out or even to bring a smile to his lips.

But where Catherine failed, another succeeded. The story goes—and, since it has been accepted by such excellent authorities on the period as Niel and Bouchot, we see no reason to doubt its authenticity—that one day, not long after the death of the first Dauphin, François I complained to Diane de Poitiers, widow of Louis de Brézé, Grand Sénéchal of Normandy, of the melancholy humour and uncouth manners of the new heir to the Crown. To which that lady laughingly replied that “he must be made to fall in love, and that she would make him her gallant.”¹

She did, indeed, make him her gallant, but not in the platonic sense, in which his Majesty had understood the expression. Diane was thirty-seven—nearly twenty years older than the Dauphin—but she was still eminently seductive: tall and perfectly shaped, with jet black hair, fine eyes, regular features, and a dazzling complexion, which, thanks to healthy exercise and

¹ Le Laborière, *Additions aux Mémoires de Castelnau*, vol. i.



DIANE DE POITIERS, DUCHESSE DE VALENTINOIS.

From a photograph by A. Giraudon, Paris, after a drawing in the Bibliothèque Nationale, by François Clouet.

habits of personal cleanliness, but too unusual in the first half of the sixteenth century, she succeeded in preserving long after the bloom of other ladies of her age had become merely a memory. Moreover, she was endowed with very considerable intellectual powers, combined with an inflexible determination and a marvellous adroitness in attaining her ends.

In order to assure a greater and more durable ascendancy over the Dauphin, she was in no hurry to complete his subjugation, but posed before every one as the mentor of youth and inexperience, the guide of the future King of France towards noble thoughts and generous actions. And so admirably did she play this part that few appear to have had any suspicion that the young prince's initiation into the mysteries of love was proceeding simultaneously with his instruction in courtly manners and the duties of his exalted position; indeed, so shrewd an observer as the Venetian Ambassador, Marino Cavalli, wrote that many persons believed that the Grande Sénéchale's affection for her royal pupil was "like that of a mother for a son." When, at length, the Court was undeceived, the Dauphin was completely in her toils, and in her toils he was to remain until the day of his death, two and twenty years later.

The Sénéchale, however, was not allowed to triumph with impunity. It is true that she had nothing to fear from the Dauphine, who, though wounded to the quick by her husband's infidelity and consumed with hatred and jealousy of the siren who had bewitched him, considered it prudent to disguise her feelings, and treated her rival with the same courtesy as before. Catherine's position, at this time, and indeed until the birth of the first of her ten children in January 1543, was an exceedingly precarious one, and, living as she did in constant dread of being repudiated, she was careful to keep as far as possible in the background and to conciliate by every means in her power the King, her husband, and all who possessed any influence with them.

But, if Catherine placed no obstacles in her rival's path, there was another lady who was very far from disposed to leave the S n chale in peaceable possession of her conquest. This was the King's mistress, Anne de Pisseleu, whom, shortly after her elevation, Fran ois I, with the view of saving appearances and diminishing the scandal, had married to Jeanne de Brosse, grandson of Louis XI's confidant, Philippe de Comines, who consented to the marriage proposed to him in order to recover his family estates, which had been confiscated, owing to the participation of his father, Ren  de Brosse, in the conspiracy of Bourbon. As the result of his complaisance, the King not only restored to him his confiscated property and appointed him Governor of Brittany, but, in 1530, erected for him, or rather for his wife, the county of  tampes into a duchy-peerage. The new duke and peer took rank immediately after the Duc de Guise.

Anne de Pisseleu's marriage, of course, made no difference to her relations with the King, for the union was merely a nominal one, and the complaisant husband resided for the most part in his government of Brittany. Her credit far exceeded that which her predecessor in the royal affections had enjoyed, and she used it to protect artists and men of letters, who vied with one another in celebrating her charms, to sustain the Reformed ideas, but especially to enrich her numerous relatives.¹ Louise of Savoy had died in 1531; Marguerite d'Angoul me, the King's sister, having married, as her second husband, Henri d'Albret, King of Navarre,

¹ Her uncle, Antoine Sanguin, was successively created Abb  de Fleury, Bishop of Orl ans, cardinal, and, finally, Archbishop of Toulouse. She procured for Charles de Pisseleu, her second brother, the Abbey of Bourgeuil, and subsequently the Bishopric of Condom, and, for another brother, the Abbey of Compi gne. Two of the elder sisters became abbesses, while she found husbands for the younger among the greatest families in the kingdom. It is little wonder that, in those days, where a king happened to be concerned, people were inclined to regard the peccadilloes of their wives, daughters, or sisters with a very indulgent eye.

resided but little at her brother's Court ; Queen Eleanor and Catherine de' Medici were entirely without influence. In consequence, the Duchesse d'Étampes was Queen in everything but the name, and, with few exceptions, all the ladies paid their court to her. The most notable of those who declined to acknowledge her ascendancy was the Sénéchale, in consequence of which the favourite had for some time past regarded that lady with far from friendly feelings. It needed, indeed, but a spark to rouse this slumbering hatred into malignant activity, and Diane's conquest of the Dauphin supplied it. For, great as was the credit that Madame d'Étampes enjoyed, she knew that it must terminate with the King's life, and she knew, too, that, though François I was but forty-five, his health was so undermined by the excesses of his youth that he was unlikely to live many years. The prospect of the Sénéchale reigning in her place, and being in a position to pay off old scores with heavy interest, was not one which she could afford to regard with equanimity ; and she accordingly determined to leave no means untried to expel her enemy from the citadel which she had captured.

The antagonism between the favourites of the King and the Dauphin ere long developed into a veritable war, which divided the Court into two opposing camps. Madame d'Étampes had for allies Chabot de Brion, Admiral of France, who, scandal asserted, shared the lady's affections with his royal master, her uncle Antoine Sanguin, Cardinal de Meudon, most of the men of letters, some of whom did not hesitate to sully their pens by composing the grossest epigrams against Diane, and the majority of the courtiers, who naturally preferred to worship the risen planet rather than one which might be many years before it reached its zenith. The Sénéchale was assured of the support of Anne de Montmorency, of the Cardinal de Lorraine, and of such courtiers as had sufficient foresight to sacrifice present to future advantages.

Madame d'Étampes favoured the Reformers ; Diane declared openly for the suppression of heresy, and to her attitude on this question the latter was largely indebted for such powerful allies as Montmorency and the cardinal, both of whom shared her hatred of the new doctrines, the former from sincere religious conviction, the latter from fear of losing his benefices and episcopates. The cardinal, not content with paying his own court to the Dauphin's favourite, strongly recommended the Duc de Guise to follow his example, or, at any rate, to direct his sons to do so, and thereby make sure of the young men's credit and favour in the next reign, which might be much nearer than most people supposed. To this proposal Guise, who held a very high opinion of his Eminence's astuteness, consented, so far as his sons were concerned, and brought the three elder, François, Charles, and Claude, to Court, where they were soon among the most assiduous of those who paid homage to Diane. The duke himself, however, held aloof from both parties and declined to compromise himself.

The Truce of Nice had stipulated for a ten years' suspension of hostilities between the monarchs whose rivalry had so long distracted Europe. It lasted barely four, and long ere those four years had passed it was obvious that its rupture was inevitable. The truce itself and the Aigues-Mortes interview, at which François I, lured on by the bait of the Milanese, had promised to abandon the German Protestants and to aid Charles V in his struggle against the Infidel and his efforts for Catholic unity, had been mainly the work of Montmorency, who, since the success of his defensive strategy in Provence, had acquired great influence with the King.

A strange character was Anne de Montmorency. Arrogant, harsh, and brutal to his inferiors, servile towards those from whose favour he had anything to

expect, incapable of gratitude, avaricious, and grossly licentious, he was, at the same time, one of the most bigoted of Catholics, who appeared to imagine that he could atone for his vices by an exalted devotion. But, to his narrow mind, devotion consisted in a punctilious observance of the forms and ceremonies of the Church and in respect for the established authorities, the Pope and the Emperor. His conscience revolted against the alliances with Turks and Lutherans in which the Very Christian King had not scrupled to engage, and, though he did his duty against the Imperialists in the field, he was always a consistent advocate of peace with the Emperor, insomuch that his enemies did not hesitate to accuse him of preferring the interests of Rome to those of France.

Towards the end of 1538, François I had a severe illness, which left him for a time a physical wreck and affected his mind to some degree as well as his body. The conduct of affairs now fell completely into the hands of Montmorency, upon whom, in February 1539, was conferred the office of Constable, vacant since the treason of Bourbon, and he took full advantage of his opportunity. In conjunction with Diane de Poitiers and the Chancellor Poyet, he procured the arrest and condemnation of the Admiral, Chabot de Brion, Madame d'Étampes's principal champion and long Montmorency's sworn enemy, on a charge of enriching himself in various ways at the expense of the State; and having thus succeeded in ridding himself of this formidable rival in the royal favour, he proceeded to give free rein to his Catholic and Imperialist predilections. He broke off the friendly relations which had existed with England, the German Protestant Princes and the Turks, and not only persuaded the King, dazzled by the chimerical hope of a voluntary restitution of the Milanese, to reject the offer of the rebellious burghers of Ghent to acknowledge him as their suzerain, but to reveal their proposals to Charles V, and to offer him a passage through

France, when he journeyed thither to reduce his revolted subjects to obedience.

If we are to believe an historian of the Guises,¹ the Duc de Guise protested warmly against François I's decision to refuse the offer of the Gantois and to permit Charles V to pass through his realm. "The Emperor," said he, "will regard the generosity with which the King thinks to amaze him as an act of folly, deserving only of ridicule." His Majesty reminded the duke that, if they followed his advice, they would lose the chance of obtaining the Milanese, which the Emperor had virtually promised him for his youngest son Charles, who, on the death of his eldest brother, had assumed the new Dauphin's former title of Duc d'Orléans. "We are refusing a town," he observed, "in order to recover an entire country." Guise, however, continued his objections, and, as he withdrew, remarked: "The King is going to allow himself to be deceived by the most notorious of deceivers."

His prediction was speedily verified, and, a few months later, the King, to his intense mortification, found that he had once more sacrificed the substance for the shadow and permitted Charles to subdue his rebellious Flemish subjects, come to an understanding with the German Protestant Princes, and re-establish his authority throughout the whole Empire, while deluding him with promises which he had never had the remotest intention of fulfilling. In his irritation, he lent a ready ear to the suggestions of Madame d'Étampes and her partisans that the Constable had sacrificed the interests of the King to those of the heir to the throne, and secretly connived at the Emperor's duplicity, from a desire to prevent the aggrandisement of the Duc d'Orléans, of whom his elder brother was jealous; and in July 1540 Montmorency was disgraced and banished the Court. The difficulty of renewing the alliances which had been broken during the administration of the Constable

¹ Fournier.

induced François I to postpone hostilities for a couple of years ; but on July 12, 1542, war was formally declared.

On this occasion, François, notwithstanding that a vigorous attack upon the Milanese appeared to promise a certain and speedy conquest, decided to remain on the defensive beyond the Alps, and to invade Luxembourg and Roussillon. The command of the Army of the South was given to the Dauphin, with an experienced general, in the person of Annebaut, to advise him, while that of the North was nominally under the orders of his younger brother, the Duc d'Orléans, though Guise was entrusted with its direction.

The Duc d'Orléans, who was almost the exact counterpart of what his father had been at his age—gay, good-humoured, rash, vain, and egotistical, for which reason the King was as much attached to him as he was indifferent to the Dauphin—brought with him his favourite, the future Maréchal de Tavannes, and a crowd of young gentlemen who were making their first campaign and were all burning to distinguish themselves. The sagacious plans of the veteran of border warfare were completely disconcerted by the ardour of these hot-headed youths, who, encouraged by the King's son, supported with impatience Guise's authority, and even occasionally dared to flout it.

Orléans, thirsting for glory, insisted on laying siege to Damvilliers, and took it. Guise gave orders that the garrison should be kept as prisoners of war ; but Orléans, who, on his own responsibility, had promised them their liberty, secretly directed Tavannes, who guarded one of the gates, to let them go, which he did. Guise sent for Tavannes and demanded by whose orders he had allowed the prisoners to go free. He replied coolly that it had been by those of his master. The duke was indignant, but “ M. d'Orléans embraced M. de Guyse, and everything was smoothed over.”¹

This incident was only an earnest of what was to

¹ Tavannes, *Mémoires*.

follow. After taking Damvilliers, the army commenced the siege of Yvoy, in Luxembourg, which, however, threatened to prove a longer business than they had bargained for, or the military importance of the place justified them in undertaking. The King, more occupied with the fate of Perpignan, which the Dauphin's army was investing, sent orders to Guise to raise the siege. The latter at once prepared to obey; but Tavannes hurried off to the Duc d'Orléans, to warn him of what was contemplated. "The King is going to lose a town," said he, "you honour. Your brother will get Perpignan, you only disgrace. M. de Guise has not the same interest as you have."

Early the following morning, just when Guise, who had spent the whole night in superintending the preparations for breaking up the camp, had retired to his tent to snatch an hour or two's sleep, the two young gentlemen ordered four pieces of cannon to be brought up and placed in a hollow road, in order to bombard a part of the walls in which a small breach had already been effected. But the vigilance of the old general was not so easily eluded, and he surprised them just as they were getting their battery into position. His indignation knew no bounds; but, since it was impossible for him to vent it upon a Son of France and his nominal commander, he determined to call Tavannes to account. "M. de Guyse approached M. d'Orléans, who was carrying the Sieur de Tavannes upon the crupper of his saddle, censured this action, and offered to waive his quality of prince to fight and to maintain that it was an ill-advised enterprise." Tavannes sprang to the ground, and, instead of attempting to excuse the escapade which he had counselled, haughtily exclaimed: "If it pleases you to waive your rank in order to fight me, you will do me much honour, and you will find me a worthy antagonist." The Duc d'Orléans intervened and prevented the proposed duel; but the battery was placed as Tavannes had suggested, and, after a bombard-

ment of five hours, the breach was sufficiently widened to render an assault practicable; whereupon the town capitulated.¹

Luxembourg, Arlon, and Montmédi followed the example of Damvilliers and Yvoy; but what permanent advantage could an army hope to gain in which lads hardly out of their 'teens flouted the authority of an experienced commander and showed so little respect for his age and rank as to be ready to engage him in single combat? The folly and egotism of the Duc d'Orléans and his friends, indeed, not only prevented these successes being followed up, but sacrificed the most important of them. Bitterly jealous of his elder brother, and learning that there was a prospect of a great battle being fought in Roussillon, the young prince promptly disbanded the greater part of his forces, and, leaving only very weak garrisons to hold the captured towns, hurried off to the South, with his feather-brained entourage, in quest of a battle which was never fought. The Imperialists took prompt advantage of this to recover the town of Luxembourg, and, but for the courage and activity of Guise, the other places taken by the French would have shared the same fate. Little, however, as had been achieved by the Army of the North, it had, at any rate, done better than that commanded by the Dauphin, who had been obliged to raise the siege of Perpignan and retreat across the frontier.

The war in 1543 was confined to Italy and the Netherlands. Towards the end of August, a considerable French army commanded by François I in person again invaded Luxembourg, in the hope of diverting the Imperialists' attention from the dominions of Charles V's rebellious vassal, the Duke of Clèves. Guise accompanied the King, and with him came his eldest son François, Comte d'Aumale, who, in marked contrast to the other young nobles, so greedy for glory and so scornful of discipline, had already given promise of possessing

¹ Tavannes, *Mémoires*.

military talents of an unusually high order. When, for the second time, the army laid siege to the town of Luxembourg, so foolishly lost the preceding year, owing to the carelessness of the Duc d'Orléans, it was to Aumale that the King entrusted the direction of the principal battery. All night the young prince supervised the engineers who were getting the cannon into position on the parapet of the trench. In order that he might the more easily be found in the darkness and recognised when he had orders to give, he wore a white doublet; and when, about an hour before dawn, he stepped out of the shelter of the trenches to reconnoitre the place, he was perceived by some arquebusiers on the walls. They immediately opened fire, and one ball penetrated "the top of the instep, near the ankle."¹

Aumale was carried to his tent, and thence to Longwy, where the King's surgeons and those of his father attended him. The wound was a very painful one, and, while the ball was being extracted, the young prince, courageous though he was, could not prevent a groan escaping him. Whereupon, we are told, his Spartan sire, who was standing by his side, reprimanded him for his want of fortitude, observing that "persons of his rank ought not to feel their wounds, but, on the contrary, to take pleasure in building their reputation on the ruin of their bodies."

It was at first feared that François de Lorraine would remain permanently lame. Happily, this apprehension was not realised, and, after a few months under his mother's care at Joinville, he was completely cured.

¹ Martin du Bellay, *Mémoires*.

CHAPTER VI

Critical situation of France, invaded by the Emperor and Henry VIII simultaneously—Heroic defence of Saint-Dizier—The garrison is induced to capitulate, owing to the receipt of a forged order purporting to come from the Duc de Guise—Charge of treason against Madame d'Étampes considered—The Imperialists make a raid upon Joinville—Paris panic-stricken at the near approach of the enemy—The King and Guise arrive in the capital and succeed in restoring tranquillity—Peace of Crépy—Death of the Duc d'Orléans—Terrible lance-wound received by the Duc d'Aumale in a skirmish before Boulogne—His life saved by the skill and resolution of the celebrated surgeon Ambroise Paré—Wonderful fortitude of the wounded prince—His letter to the King—He is appointed Governor of Dauphiné—François I becomes suspicious of the wealth and power of the Guises—Suspicious death of the Comte d'Enghien in a snowball fight—Charges of foul play against the Dauphin and the Guises considered—Death of François I.

THE campaigns of 1542 and 1543 had served only to exhaust the resources of the country, without achieving anything of the least importance; and in the spring of the following year, France found herself reduced entirely to the defensive and threatened with invasion from three sides simultaneously: from the German frontier, where Charles V had assembled a considerable army; from Picardy, where Henry VIII, now again in league with the Emperor, was preparing to advance on Paris, at the head of 30,000 Englishmen and 15,000 Flemings; and from Piedmont.

The brilliant victory of Ceresole (April 14), gained by the young Comte d'Enghien¹ over a much superior force of Imperialists removed all danger on the side of Italy, but that on the North and East was very grave; indeed, had Henry VIII and Charles V adhered strictly to their original plan of advancing straight upon

¹ Louis de Bourbon.

Paris, without lingering to lay siege to any of the fortresses which lay on their respective lines of march, the capital must have fallen. But neither King nor Emperor trusted his ally, and the result of their mutual suspicion was that Henry turned aside to besiege Boulogne and Montreuil, while the Imperialists invested Saint-Dizier, which commanded the passage of the Marne.

Although the fortifications of Saint-Dizier were in a very dilapidated condition, the heroism of its garrison, under the command of Louis de Beuil, Comte de Sancerre, arrested the advance of the invaders for nearly six weeks; and it was not until August 17 that it capitulated. Its fall came about in a singular manner.

The scouts of the investing army intercepted and brought to the Imperial Chancellor, Granvelle, a packet in which was found "the alphabet of the cypher" which Guise employed for his correspondence with Sancerre. With the aid of this cypher, Granvelle proceeded to forge a letter from Guise to the governor of Saint-Dizier, in which the duke warned him that he must not expect any assistance and authorised him, in the name of the King, to accept an honourable capitulation, which the Imperialists, of course, readily accorded. Sancerre surrendered the place and justified himself to the King, "by declaring that he had capitulated on the orders of M. de Guyse." The latter indignantly denied that he had sent the count any such orders, and "wished to waive all his grades, dignities, and noble qualities of prince to engage in a duel with M. de Sancerre." However, after the quarrel had lasted some days, it was recognised that the letter was a forgery.¹

¹ Martin du Bellay, *Mémoires*; Brantôme, *les Duels*. Several writers allege that it was not chance, but treason, which placed Guise's cypher in the enemy's hands. If we are to believe the historian Beaucaire, who wrote during the reign of Charles IX, under the name of "Belcarius," Benvenuto Cellini, and Brantôme, Madame d'Étampes, alarmed at the declining health of her royal lover and at the approach of the day when the Dauphin would succeed him, had become a warm friend and partisan of the Duc d'Orléans; and, in order to ensure herself an asylum on the King's death, ardently desired to bring about an arrangement between

After the submission of Saint-Dizier, a detachment of the Imperial army swooped down upon Joinville, where they pillaged the church of Notre-Dame and carried off everything of value that it contained, after which they set it on fire. These excesses appear to have been committed by the order, or, at least, with the sanction, of Charles V, out of revenge for the death of his favourite, René de Nassau, Prince of Orange, who, during the siege of Saint-Dizier, had been killed by a shot from a culverin, fired from the tower of the church by a priest named Joachim. The invaders also burned a number of houses in the town, and completely ruined the beautiful gardens of the château. The château itself was not attacked, since it was far too strong to be reduced save by a regular siege.

The church was subsequently rebuilt by Guise at his own expense, and he facilitated the rebuilding of the houses that had been destroyed. The duke abandoned the whole of the revenues of the seigneurie of Joinville, amounting to over 30,000 livres, for that year, and a portion of them in the two following years. He also obtained from the Government the remission of the *taille*, or salt-tax, for a year, and gave a large sum to be distributed among the poorer sufferers by the raid.¹

François I and Charles V which would secure to the young prince the hand of either the Infanta Maria or a daughter of the King of the Romans, and, with her, an independent sovereignty. Such an arrangement had already been proposed by Charles V in 1540, but the Dauphin's party had persuaded François to reject it. As the lady considered that the success of the Imperial arms would be the surest means of accomplishing this, she had established a secret correspondence with the Emperor, through the medium of one of her admirers, the Comte de Bossut-Longueval, and had resumed, from interested motives, the policy which her enemy Montmorency had embraced from religious fanaticism.

That Madame d'Étampes had constituted herself the champion of the younger brother against the elder, and had the strongest reasons for wishing to see him established in an independent sovereignty, and that she used her influence with the King in favour of peace, is perfectly true. But, though her enemies believed, or, at any rate, affected to believe, that she was at this time in communication with Charles, and, though, after François's death, a prosecution for high treason was commenced against both her and Longueval, it is doubtful if there were any real foundation for such a charge.

¹ To compensate Guise for the loss which he himself had sustained

The refusal of Henry VIII to move southwards until Boulogne and Montreuil were in his hands, and the threatened exhaustion of his supplies, decided the Emperor to open negotiations for peace, on the basis of the proposals which had been rejected in 1540. But the *pourparlers* were without result, and in the first days of September the Imperialists began to advance along the Marne and seized Épernay and Château-Thierry.¹ The panic in the capital and in all the country round was indescribable, and large numbers of the Parisians had already fled from the city, carrying all their portable property with them, when the King and their idol, Guise, appeared upon the scene. Thereupon, craven terror gave way to boundless confidence, and "the majority declared that they had no longer any fear, since they had their King and M. de Guise for defenders."

The danger soon passed. As Henry VIII, who was on the point of reducing Boulogne, still declined to cross the Somme, and the Emperor's army, which consisted chiefly of inferior *landsknechts*, was dwindling every day from sickness and desertion, Charles V recognised that an advance upon Paris would be a most hazardous undertaking, and accordingly retired on Soissons, from which town he reopened his negotiations with the French Court. François was this time ready enough to treat, and on September 18 peace between the two monarchs was signed at Crépy, on the basis of a marriage between the Duc d'Orléans and either the

on this occasion, François I shortly afterwards erected "the baronies, estates, and seigneuries of Mayenne-la-Juhée, Sablé, and La Ferté-Bernard and the castellanies of Ennée and Nantinant" into the marquisate of Mayenne, in favour of the duke's third son, Claude de Lorraine, "out of consideration," ran the letters-patent, "for the great, virtuous, and praiseworthy services which the Duc de Guise has for a long time past rendered to us and to the public welfare of our realm, in our wars, without having spared his own person, his children, or his property.

¹ If we are to believe Beaucaire, Charles V was indebted for this success to the valuable information furnished by Madame d'Étampes's agent, Longueval.

Emperor's daughter or niece, the Netherlands to be the dower of the former princess and the Milanese of the latter. Orléans was to receive a large appanage at the expense of his brother's future kingdom, a stipulation which so enraged the Dauphin that, though he did not dare to refuse his formal consent to the treaty, he subsequently entered a secret protest against it at Fontainebleau, in the presence of Vendôme, Enghien, and Aumale, in which he declared that he had only signed "*pour la crainte and révérence paternelle.*"

Less than twelve months after the signing of the Peace of Crépy, the treaty was rendered, to all intents and purposes, waste parchment, and the Dauphin delivered from the rivalry of his younger brother, by the death of the latter from plague at the siege of Boulogne, which the French had unsuccessfully endeavoured to recover by *camisado* in the autumn of 1644.

It was in a skirmish outside the walls of Boulogne that François de Lorraine received the terrible wound which earned him the name of "*le Balafré.*"

Perceiving some French cavalry, who were hotly engaged with a detachment of the enemy, on the point of being taken in flank by reinforcements from the town, he galloped at full speed to their assistance, followed only by his brother Claude and the Sieur de Vieilleville. It was his custom to go into battle with the visor of his helmet raised, and, being furiously charged by one of the English men-at-arms, he received "a lance-thrust, which entered below the right eye, sloping towards the nose, and passed out on the other side, between the ear and the nape of the neck"¹; and was delivered with such violence that the shaft broke off close to the steel head, which remained embedded in the cheek-bone, without leaving more than an inch or so of wood whereby it might be extracted.

Notwithstanding this terrible wound, the young prince contrived to keep his saddle, and his brother and

¹ Ambroise Paré, *Voyage de Boulogne.*

Vieilleville, coming to his assistance, conducted him back to the French lines. He presented a pitiable spectacle, with blood streaming down his face and over his armour, and the surgeons, after examining the wound, declared that he was beyond their aid, and that to attempt to extract the spear-head would only be to cause him additional and useless suffering.

Happily, the King, on learning of Aumale's plight, had sent one of his own surgeons, Ambroise Paré, soon to become so famous, with orders to do everything possible to save so valuable a life. Despite the protests of his colleagues, Paré determined to endeavour to extract the spear-head by the aid of a pair of farrier's pincers, but, before doing so, he considered it his duty to warn the wounded man that it would be necessary to use great force and to obtain his consent to the operation. "I consent to everything; set to work!" was the reply; and Paré, setting his foot on Aumale's face, seized the broken stump of the lance with the pincers and drew out the spear-head.

The prince's fortitude, we are told, did not abandon him for a moment during this cruel operation, "which was not without fracture of bones, nerves, veins, arteries, and other parts,"¹ and which he supported "as though one had only pulled a hair out of his head."² Transported in a litter to Picquigny, he hung for three days between life and death. But on the fourth he began to mend, and, thanks to the iron constitution which he had inherited from his father, he eventually made so complete a recovery that his sight appears to have been quite unaffected and no trace of this astonishing wound remained, except the scar from which he derived the name of "*le Balafre*"—a scar equally glorious for him and for Ambroise Paré.

In the Bibliothèque Nationale may be seen a laconic note, written in a somewhat tremulous hand, which

¹ Ambroise Paré, *Voyage de Boulogne*.

² Martin du Bellay, *Mémoires*.

François de Lorraine addressed to the King so soon as the surgeons had pronounced him convalescent :—

“Sire, I take the liberty of informing you that I am very well ; I hope that I shall not be blind of an eye. Your very humble servitor—Le Guizard.”¹

François I admired the courage and military talents of the young prince, and showed his appreciation of his services by nominating him Governor of Dauphiné. Aumale coveted the government of Provence—that realm of his ancestor, King René—but this was an ambition which his Majesty did not see his way to gratify. The fact is that the King, by a sort of belated distrust, was beginning to view with serious misgivings the almost royal position that the honours and emoluments he had conferred upon the Guises had enabled them to acquire ; and he was far from pleased to observe the assiduous court which François de Lorraine and his brothers paid to the Dauphin and his mistress, Diane de Poitiers.

Broken in health and often a prey to the most cruel sufferings, on bad terms with his only surviving son, conscious that his persistent pursuit of the Italian chimera had brought nothing but disaster upon his realm, and that Court and people alike awaited with impatience the new era which was about to open, the unknown world which the crescent of Diane was to fill, the once brilliant monarch—“*le Roi chevalier*”—whom all the young princes of Europe had taken as their model, was ending his days in loneliness and sorrow. Early in 1546 another grief overtook him.

Since the death of the Duc d’Orléans, the King had bestowed his affection upon the Comte d’Enghien, the brilliant young victor of Ceresole, who had rescued the Bourbons in some degree from the sort of semi-disgrace under which they had lain since the treason of the Constable, gathered round him the friends of the de-

¹ “Le Guizard” seems to have been a name which the King had bestowed upon him.

ceased prince, and become the centre of opposition to the Guises, whom the Dauphin favoured.

In February 1546, the King was staying at the Château of la Roche-Guyon, not far from Mantes. As there had been a heavy fall of snow, his Majesty suggested that the younger members of the Court should organise a snowball-fight. Sides were accordingly formed, one, led by the Dauphin and the Comte d'Aumale, defending a house; the other, led by Enghien, besieging it. "During the combat," says Martin du Bellay, "some ill-advised person threw a linen-chest out of the window, which fell on the Sieur d'Enghien's head and inflicted such injuries that he died a few days later.

Du Bellay does not give the name of this "ill-advised person," but some writers, less reticent, name François de Lorraine, and have even gone so far as to declare that he acted by order of the Dauphin; while others assert that he was a certain Conte Bentivoglio, an Italian noble attached to the Guises, whom they accuse of having instigated the deed.

Nothing in the character of the future Henri II encourages the belief that he could have been the instigator, or even a party, to so foul a crime. Besides, it is difficult to see what he could possibly have had to gain by it, since, though the favour shown Enghien by the King may not have disposed him to regard his young kinsman with a very friendly eye, in view of the circumstance that Henri's accession to the throne could not be long delayed, he had certainly no cause to regard him in the light of a rival whom it was advisable to get rid of.

As for the Guises, as one of their biographers points out, the murder of Enghien would not only have been of no advantage to them, since he had four brothers to dispute with them the royal favour, but extremely hazardous, since these brothers would undoubtedly have endeavoured to avenge him. Moreover, François de Lorraine sought the favour of the Dauphin and based

his hopes of advancement on that prince's accession to the throne; while it was with the King alone that Enghien was in favour. Finally, is it conceivable that Claude de Lorraine, the head of the House, without whose knowledge Aumale would never have dared to engage the family in an enterprise as dangerous as it was criminal, would have consented to the murder of his own brother-in-law's son? ¹

The probability is that, notwithstanding the suspicious circumstances attending it, the death of Enghien was due merely to one of those acts of brutal horseplay so common at this epoch.

A little more than a year later, on the last day of March 1547, François I died at Rambouillet. On his death-bed he recommended his son to retain the present Ministers, Annebaut, who had succeeded Chabot de Brion as Admiral, and the Cardinal de Tournon; to exclude Montmorency from power, and, above all things, to beware of the Guises, "whose aim was to strip him and his children to their doublets and his people to their shirts."

¹ Forneron, *les Ducs de Guise et leur époque*.

CHAPTER VII

Character of Henri II—A King "born to be governed rather than to govern"—His accession followed by a complete revolution of the palace—Recall of Montmorency, who is reinstated in all his dignities and offices—Dismissal of the late King's Ministers and reorganisation of the Council, in which three of the Guises are included—Disgrace and persecution of Madame d'Étampes—Diane de Poitiers aspires to rule both the King and the kingdom—Jealous of the influence of the Constable, she decides to pit the Guises against him, and then to hold the balance between the two parties—The "lion and the fox"; the Duc d'Aumale and Charles de Lorraine—Aggrandizement of the Guises—Power of the Montmorencies—Diane de Poitiers created Duchesse de Valentinois and enriched almost beyond the dreams of avarice—Shameful rapacity of the favourites.

THE death of François I was received with feelings of relief by the majority of the Court and the great mass of the nation. For the Court was weary of the domination of a favourite who made and unmade Ministers, was suspected of intriguing with the enemies of France, and pursued with the utmost vindictiveness those who declined to abase themselves before her; while the nation was disgusted with the ruinous wars in which François's futile rivalry with a monarch so manifestly superior in statecraft to himself was perpetually involving the country. It was believed, too, that his quiet, reserved successor, if he lacked those showy qualities which had so often served to conceal the grave defects in his father's character, possessed a good sense and intelligence which would more than atone for any shortcomings in this respect, and that, while upholding the honour of France abroad, he would abstain from wars of aggression and make it his first study to repair the ravages which the ambition of the late King had wrought. That this belief was held, not only by French-

men, but by foreigners well qualified to form an opinion of Henri II's character, is proved by a despatch which the Venetian Ambassador, Marino Cavalli, addressed to his Government during the year preceding François I's death :—

“ His [Henri's] qualities promise France the most worthy king she has had for two hundred years. This hope is, moreover, a great comfort for this nation, which consoles itself for present ills by the hope of prosperity to come. This prince is twenty-eight years of age; he is of a very robust constitution, and of a rather melancholy disposition; not very ready with his answers when addressed, but very decided and very firm in his opinions; and what he has once said he adheres to with great tenacity. His is not a very keen intellect, but men of that stamp are often the most successful; they are like autumn fruits which ripen late, but which are, for that reason, better and more durable than those of the summer or the spring. . . . He spends his money in a manner at once prudent and honourable. He is but little addicted to women; his own wife is sufficient for him; while, for conversation, he confines himself to that of the Sénéchale of Normandy, who is forty-eight years of age. He entertains for her a sincere affection; but it is not thought that there is anything lascivious about it; and it is asserted that this lady has taken upon herself to instruct, correct, and counsel the Dauphin and to urge him to all actions worthy of him.”¹

Henri II was, in his way, a conscientious man, who really desired to do his duty and to promote the happiness of his subjects. Matteo Dandolo, who succeeded

¹ Armand Baschet, *Diplomatie vénitienne*. Cavalli's remarks concerning the nature of the relationship between Henri and Diane are very curious, since they prove that the *liaison* must have been conducted with a circumspection very unusual in royal amours in the sixteenth century, and that many people found it difficult to believe that, in a Court full of young and beautiful women, the prince could really have selected, as his mistress, a lady old enough to be his mother. This pleasing illusion, however, did not long survive Henri's accession to the throne, as the despatches of Cavalli's successor at the French court show.

Cavalli as Venetian Ambassador, tells us that, at his coronation, he was observed to be praying long and earnestly, and when afterwards Diane de Poitiers inquired what had been the subject of his petitions, he replied that he had prayed that, "if the crown which he was about to assume promised good government and would assure the happiness of his people, God would be mercifully pleased to leave it to him for a long while; but, if otherwise, that He would deprive him of it very speedily. Left to himself or guided by disinterested Ministers, it is probable that he would have fulfilled the expectations which had been formed of him; but he was "born to be governed rather than to govern,"¹ and was surrounded by greedy and ambitious favourites, who thought only of exploiting him for their own selfish ends, and whose interest it was to prevent the grievances of his subjects from reaching the King's ears; while his infatuation for the Sénéchale "rendered him entirely her subject and slave."²

"In the sixteenth century," writes Decrue, "France presents in her government some resemblance to Turkey. One assists there at the disgrace of sultanas, at the replacing of grand viziers, at veritable revolutions of the palace. In 1547, it is not only a King who dies; it is a policy which changes, a Court which disappears."³ Scarcely, indeed, had François I drawn his last breath than the new King hastened to throw to the winds the counsels which his father had given him. Montmorency was recalled to Court, reinstated in all his offices, and presented with a sum of 100,000 écus, as compensation for the salaries which had been sequestered. Annebaut and the Cardinal de Tournon, who had enjoyed the late Sovereign's entire confidence, were both got rid of;

¹ Beaucaire.

² Despatch of Saint-Mauris, Imperial Ambassador at the Court of France, to the Queen-dowager of Hungary, Governess of the Netherlands, May 1547.

³ *Anne, Duc de Montmorency, Connétable et Pair de France.*



HENRI II, KING OF FRANCE.

From a drawing after François Clouet, in the Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris.
Photo by Giraudon, Paris.

Annebaut being deprived of his rank of Maréchal de France, which he held together with the office of Admiral, while Tournon was sent to Rome, under the pretext of maintaining French influence there. The remaining members of the Council were also eliminated and their places filled by the King of Navarre, the Duc de Vendôme, the Cardinal Jean de Lorraine, and the two elder sons of the Duc de Guise, the Comte d'Aumale, and Charles, Archbishop of Rheims,¹ afterwards the celebrated Cardinal Charles de Lorraine, with whom were associated the Constable; the Comte d'Harcourt, a kinsman of the Guises; the two Saint-Andrés, the younger of whom, Jacques Alban de Saint-André, was a great favourite of the King, Robert de la Marck, Seigneur de Sedan, who had married one of the daughters of Diane de Poitiers; Humieres, a cousin of Montmorency's and *gouverneur* of the Children of France; the Chancellor Olivier; and two friends of the Constable, the Président Bertrandi and the financier Villeroy. All real power, however, resided in the hands of the Constable, the Guises, and the younger Saint-André.

In his last hours, François I had made a very pressing recommendation to his son in favour of Madame d'Étampes, vowing that he was altogether mistaken in believing that she had been hostile to him, and bidding him remember that she was a woman, and therefore entitled to consideration. Henri had promised the dying King that he would protect her, perhaps with the intention of keeping his word. But he soon found that the reaction against the lady was too strong for him to resist, even if he had wished to do so. A jealous woman does not pardon, and Diane was determined to be avenged on the rival who had thwarted her ambition, criticised her beauty, and offended her pride; and, besides, Madame d'Étampes had given mortal offence to the Constable and many other influential persons,

¹ In 1538, the Cardinal Jean had resigned the Archbishopric of Rheims in favour of Charles de Lorraine.

as well as to the S  n  chale. And so the blonde sovereign who had so long presided at the ladies' table in the palace of Fontainebleau, who had so long enjoyed all the honours and all the power of a queen, was obliged to surrender the magnificent jewels given her by the late King, which Henri II at once presented to Diane; and found herself charged with treasonable correspondence with the enemies of France during the invasion of 1544, her property sequestered, her servants thrown into prison, and her friends Longueval and Gilbert Bayard arrested as her accomplices.

Happily for the fallen favourite, her triumphant rival was even more rapacious ¹ than she was vindictive, and some months later, in consideration of the surrender to her of the duchess's estate of Benne, Diane consented to forgo the rest of her vengeance and to leave Madame d'  tampes in possession of the greater part of the property.²

Diane was not only rapacious and vindictive, but she was inordinately ambitious, and aspired to govern the kingdom as well as the King, or, at any rate, to assist in governing it. Honoured, flattered, consulted and dreaded, as never mistress had been before her time, she was at once Henri's trusted counsellor and the dispenser of his benefits and favours. For her there existed no

¹ If we are to believe the Imperial Ambassador, Saint-Mauris, before Henri II had been three months on the throne the lady had extracted from him no less a sum than two million livres. Probably, however, Saint-Mauris exaggerates; even Ambassadors cannot always resist the temptation of drawing the long bow.

² On his side, the duchess's friend, Longueval, secured immunity by "selling" his lordship of Marchais, near Laon, to Charles de Lorraine, who thereupon engaged to prove his innocence to the King, which he did so effectually that the prosecution which was pending against him for treasonable correspondence with the Emperor was allowed to drop, and he was set at liberty. He could not, of course, have been brought to trial without involving Madame d'  tampes; and the King, according to Varillas, was persuaded by Charles de Lorraine "not to stain the beginning of his reign by a signal and gratuitous affront to the memory of his father, by abandoning to the vengeance of justice the object which he had so tenderly loved for twenty-two years." Madame d'  tampes lived to see the last of the Valois on the throne, though very little is known of the rest of her life.

secret of State. She insisted on being told everything, and she was told. Every matter which was discussed in the Council-chamber, every despatch which arrived from the French representatives at foreign Courts, was communicated to her; and scarcely had the King finished giving audience to one of the Ambassadors than he hurried off to tell his mistress all about it. The Imperial Ambassador, Saint-Mauris, has left us in the despatch from which we have already had occasion to quote some interesting impressions of this power behind the throne, whom he designates by the name of Silvius:—

“The worst thing is that the said King allows himself to be led, and approves everything which Silvius and his nobles advise, of which the people here complain, fearing that the King will remain always in that net. After dinner, he visits the said Silvius. When he has given her an account of all the business he has transacted in the morning and up to that moment, whether with the Ambassadors or other persons of importance, he seats himself upon her lap, a guitar in his hand, upon which he plays, and inquires often of Aumale if the said Silvius ‘has not preserved her beauty,’ touching from time to time her bosom and regarding her attentively, like a man that is ensnared by love. . . .

“The King has many natural good qualities, and one might hope much from him, if he were not so stupid as to allow himself to be led as he does. The Chancellor is in despair about it, saying that ‘the women of to-day are worse than those of former times, and that they spoil everything.’ It is said that not a soul dares to remonstrate with the King, lest he should offend Silvius, fearing that the said King will reveal it to her, since he loves her so intensely. . . .

“As for Silvius, since she has come into authority, she has changed her humour and her behaviour, and people find her, in short, very haughty and insolent; while, apart from that, she is endeavouring with her

wiles and her attractions to remain in the good graces of the King and extract from him everything she can."

Great as was the influence of "Silvius" over the King, she had in the Constable a formidable rival in the royal favour. Anne de Montmorency was neither a great general, nor a great administrator, nor a far-sighted statesman, but he was a shrewd, hard-headed man and an indefatigable worker; and the value of such a Minister in a frivolous Court, where almost every one was given over to pleasure, the new Sovereign could not fail to appreciate. Moreover, the Constable was not only one of Henri's oldest friends, but had special claims to his consideration, since it was the late King's suspicion that he preferred the interests of the son to those of the father that had been mainly responsible for his disgrace.

On Henri's accession, indeed, it had seemed for a moment as though all authority was to belong to Montmorency. "In the first days of the reign, the Constable took possession of the King in such a way that he carried him off to all his residences—Chantilly, Écouen, and l'Isle Adam; and, wherever the prince was, no one could approach his person, save by his favour and introduction."¹

Now, Montmorency had been a useful friend to the Sénéchal in the days when she was waging a somewhat unequal battle with Madame d'Étampes and her allies, and she had been quite prepared to acquiesce in his restoration to all his honours and dignities. But that was an altogether different matter from allowing him to become, in the words of the editor of Tavannes's *Mémoires*, "the pilot and master of the vessel of which she held the helm," and to exercise as much influence over the King's affairs as she did over the King's person. For Diane aspired, as we have seen, to govern at the same time Henri II and his kingdom, and she

¹ Vieilleville, *Mémoires*.

could not endure the idea of sharing power with the Constable.

The Sénéchale was too clever a woman not to be aware that, great as might be her influence with her royal adorer, it had its limitations, and she did not for a moment cherish the hope that she would be able to get rid of Montmorency, as Madame d'Étampes had succeeded in doing. For her long intimacy with Henri had taught her that perhaps the most permanent feature in his character was his remarkable constancy in friendship. Cold and suspicious, he did not easily bestow his friendship, still less his affection; but, once given, it was seldom or never withdrawn, in which respect he offered a singular contrast to his father, whose favour had been as easy to lose as it was to secure. Nor is it probable that she had any desire for such an extreme measure, being not unmindful of the support which Montmorency had given her in the past; while she was aware that his services were indispensable to the King.

To arrive at her end, to secure the power for which she craved, she decided upon a much more adroit policy, namely, to raise up a rival power to that of the Constable. For, if two parties were contending for the government of France, she flattered herself that she would be able to hold the balance between them.

In ordinary circumstances, the Sénéchale would have sought for this rival power amongst the Princes or the Blood, that is to say, the two branches of the House of Bourbon, the Vendômes and the Montpensiers. But, as we have seen, the Bourbons, ever since the treason of the late Constable, had fallen into a sort of discredit, from which they were only just beginning to recover; indeed, the affection shown by François I for the ill-fated young Comte d'Enghien, had been the first sign of returning favour. Moreover, the present chief of the elder branch, Antoine—who was to marry Jeanne d'Albret, daughter of Henri d'Albret, King of Navarre, and Marguerite d'Angoulême (September 1548), and

become the father of Henri IV—and his uncle, the Cardinal Louis de Bourbon, were both hopelessly mediocre. Antoine, though brave and chivalrous, was vain, weak, voluptuous, and unstable; the cardinal, remarkable only for his indolence and his love of good cheer; while the duke's three brothers—Charles, Bishop of Saintes, Jean, Comte d'Enghien, and Louis, Prince de Condé—were as yet too young to play a prominent part, though Louis—the future titular chief of the Huguenots in the first Wars of Religion—was a youth of considerable promise. As for the younger branch, which was represented by two brothers, Louis, Duc de Montpensier, and Charles, Prince de la Roche-sur-Yon, it was entirely without influence or importance, and, in fact, remained in the shadow throughout the reign of Henri II. And so Diane was obliged to turn to the Guises, who, while enjoying most of the privileges of foreign princes, were profiting by the impotence of the Bourbons to usurp those of the Princes of the Blood.

The Duc de Guise had ceased to appear at Court save on official occasions. He was shrewd enough to recognise that, with the death of his contemporary, François I, his work was accomplished, and that it was necessary to efface himself before his sons, to whom the task of finishing what he had so ably begun might be safely entrusted.

He judged correctly, for this second generation of the Guises, represented by six young princes, was destined to eclipse altogether the first. Like the first, it was to give to France, in the persons of the two eldest, a soldier and a cardinal, “a lion and a fox”¹; but their association was to be much more formidable than that of their father and uncle, and was to raise the family so high that, when the third generation came on the stage, still with a soldier and a cardinal at its head, it

¹ Henri Martin, *Histoire de France jusqu'en 1789*. Strictly speaking, the Cardinal Jean de Lorraine was not, of course, a Guise, but he had so closely identified himself with the interests of his brother's family that he may fairly be considered a member of it.

could mount no higher save by ascending the throne itself.

The lion and the fox of the second generation were already much in evidence at Court. François, "*le Balafre*"—from the double view of character and ability undeniably the greatest man whom the House of Guise ever produced—was high in favour with the King and Henri's usual opponent at tennis, a game at which he greatly excelled. So great, indeed, was his credit that he had obtained for several of the gentlemen of his suite the command of companies of men-at-arms, an appointment hitherto reserved for nobles of high rank or officers of long and distinguished service; while his good offices with the King were continually being invoked by persons who feared to approach his Majesty directly.

His brother Charles, titular Archbishop of Rheims at fourteen, though his consecration was postponed until he had completed his twenty-first year, had also not failed to insinuate himself into the good graces of the new Sovereign, and gave every promise of following in the footsteps of his uncle, the Cardinal Jean.¹ Resembling that prelate in his rapacity, which he did not recoil from the most dishonourable means of satisfying, the licence of his morals, his love of literature and art,² and his extravagance, he was greatly his superior in ability, having "a keen and subtle mind, eloquence and

¹ He gradually succeeded in accumulating as many benefices as his uncle had acquired. In 1524, the year of his birth, he received the rich abbey of Moustiers-la-Celle, at Troyes, and in 1548 that of Moustier-Neuf, at Poitiers, which he retained until 1552. He was created a cardinal in 1547, and in 1550 obtained the bishopric of Metz, which, however, he resigned the following year. He received in succession from the Cardinal Jean the abbeys of Cluny, Fécamp, and Marmoutiers, and he also obtained those of Cormery, Saint-Martin de Laon, Saint-Rémy de Reims, Saint-Denis en France, of Monstier en Der, and Saint-Urbain at Châlons. It is related that, having been informed that Pope Paul IV had expressed his disapproval of this accumulation of benefices, he laughingly declared himself willing "to exchange all his own for those which his Holiness enjoyed."

² He was the first patron of Ronsard, and to him was largely due the foundation of the University of Rheims.

grace, combined with dignity and an active and vigilant nature.”¹ Although “regarded as a very great hypocrite in his religion,”² he was destined to become one of the most eloquent preachers of his time, whose sermons extorted the reluctant admiration of the Huguenots, who were obliged to listen to them on official occasions, and even of so celebrated an exponent of the Reformed doctrines as Théodore de Bèze; while he was endowed with such remarkable quickness of perception that the foreign Ambassadors declared that he was able to divine the object of their visits so soon as they opened their mouths, and so marvellous a memory that he was able to retain all the details of the most complicated transactions in which he was engaged without having recourse to any memoranda.

The fixed idea of these two young men—the elder twenty-eight, the younger twenty-three—was the aggrandizement of their House; and, like their father and uncle, they never for a moment lost sight of their interests or their pretensions. Both perfectly appreciated the advantage which they would derive from the friendship of Diane, and had been at pains to ingratiate themselves with the favourite; indeed, the archbishop, “one of the most accomplished in the art of paying court, had, for the space of nearly two years, constrained himself to the point of giving up his own table and dining at that of Madame [Diane]; for thus she was called, even by the Queen.”³

To arrive at an understanding with the Guises was, then, an easy task for the Sénéchale. But she was far too astute to contemplate an offensive alliance with them, which should end in relegating the Constable to obscurity. With the Constable out of the way, she foresaw that the Guises would become as great a menace to her influence as the old Minister, probably more so,

¹ Castelnau, *Mémoires*.

² Brantôme.

³ L' Aubespine, *Histoire particulière de la cour de Henri II^e*, in Cimber and Danjou.

since they were his superiors in rank and in ability as well. No; her intention was merely to adjust the equilibrium between the two parties, and then to devote all her energies to its maintenance, ready to ally herself with whichever side was for the time being the weakest, that is to say, which appeared to threaten the least danger to her own authority. It was the *rôle* which, in after-years, Catherine de' Medici was to play between the Guises and the Bourbons; but Diane will play it more skilfully than Catherine.

Accordingly, Henri II, with the gracious approval of his mistress, proceeded to load this family, whose services had been already so enormously recompensed by the Crown, and against whose greed and ambition the late King had warned him on his death-bed, with new honours and benefits. François and Charles were admitted to the Privy Council; the county of Aumale was erected into a duchy-peerage for the benefit of the former, who received the appointment of Governor and Lieutenant-General for the King in Savoy, with a salary of 16,000 livres; a cardinal's hat was procured for the latter, who took the title of Cardinal de Guise; Louis, the fourth brother, received the bishoprics of Troyes and Albi and several rich abbeys; the fifth, called, like his eldest brother, François, was made Grand-Prior of France; the seigneurie of Elbeuf was erected into a marquisate in favour of René, the Benjamin of the family; and Diane married her elder daughter, Louise de Brézé, to the third brother, Claude, Marquis de Mayenne, and obtained for him a grant of all the estates in France which were held by persons without an absolute title to them, and all the unoccupied lands, which belonged *de jure* to the Crown—a gift which not only deprived the Treasury of a valuable source of revenue, but led to the dispossession of a number of nobles, communes, and private persons, and to much harshness and injustice.

While the rival power which Diane had decided to

raise up against him was being thus aggrandized, Montmorency was far from idle. He himself held at once the offices of Constable and Grand Master of the King's Household, the governments of Languedoc and the Île de France, and the captaincies of the fortresses of the Bastille, Vincennes, Saint-Malo and Nantes. Moreover, he had five sons and seven daughters to provide for, besides numerous nephews and nieces; and he did his duty nobly by them all.

Though the eldest of the sons, François, was but seventeen years old at the accession of Henri II, their father pushed their fortunes energetically, and procured them the posts of gentlemen of the chamber or pages of honour, while they were awaiting military appointments; for, notwithstanding that he was so devout a Catholic, none of them was intended for the Church. When, in 1548, he entered, by the death of his brother, the Baron de Rochefort, into possession of all the vast estates of the Montmorency family, his eldest son received permission to bear the name of "Monsieur de Montmorency," the second, Henri, took the title of Baron de Damville, while the other three—Charles, Gabriel, and Guillaume—were known respectively as the Seigneurs de Meru, de Montbéron, and de Thoré.

Of the Constable's seven daughters, four were provided with husbands, selected from the greatest and wealthiest families of the kingdom; the other three entered religion, ready to become abbesses.

Nor had his nephews and nieces any reason to complain. The post of Colonel-General of Infantry was conferred upon Gaspard de Coligny, his sister's second son; the hand of a rich heiress bestowed on his younger brother, François d'Andelot; and an equally advantageous marriage arranged for their half-sister, Madame de Mailly. Governments, estates, benefices, pensions, companies of men-at-arms—such were the gifts which the King, at the instance of the Constable, distributed right and left among Montmorency's relatives and friends.

The younger Saint-André received, as his share of the spoil, the post of Grand Chamberlain, very considerable gifts at the expense of the royal demesne, and the *bâton* of *maréchal de France*, which the Constable was persuaded to resign in his favour, in order to compose a very pretty quarrel between him and the Sénéchale, who had claimed the *bâton* of which Annebaut had been deprived, and which had been promised to Saint-André, for her son-in-law, Robert de la Marck.

As for Diane, honours and riches almost beyond the dreams of avarice were showered upon her. Soon after his accession, Henri II presented her with the beautiful château and estate of Chenonceaux, which had been ceded to the Crown by Antoine Bohier, in 1531, the pretext for the gift being the valuable services rendered the State by her deceased husband, Louis de Brézé; then, in October 1548, he created her Duchesse de Valentinois, and gave her several estates near Montpellier; while *gratifications* from the Royal Treasury, gifts from the "good towns" which his Majesty honoured by solemn entries, the confiscated property of Protestants, fines extorted from the Jews, were being continually poured into her lap. All was grist that came to the mill, for she was one of the most rapacious of harpies, and those shapely white hands of hers were always itching to grasp whatever came within their reach.

Henri II's favourites stood like a bodyguard around the throne to prevent any one else approaching it. Enormous as were the benefits which they received from the King, they were never satisfied, for their greed was absolutely insatiable, and "they devoured him as a lion his prey."

"Estates, dignities, bishoprics, abbeys, offices, no more escaped them than do the flies the swallows. There was not a choice morsel that was not snapped up in a moment. And, for this purpose, they had, in all parts of the kingdom, paid agents and servants to give

them notice of all the deaths which occurred, so that they might demand any vacant inheritance or confiscated estate. . . . So that it was almost impossible for this good-natured prince to extend his bounty in other directions. . . . And, if the King desired to bestow a benefice upon any one, he was obliged to lie to them and to say, when they demanded it of him, that it was already bestowed. Even then, so impudent were they, that they would argue with him that this could not be, alleging that they had received immediate information when the vacancy occurred.”¹

Not satisfied with the immense benefits they extracted from the King, the favourites sought to increase their wealth by selling their protection to those who had fallen under the royal displeasure, and, in return for the cession, at a merely nominal price of some desirable château, estate, or benefice, undertaking to plead their cause with his Majesty. In this way, as we have seen, Madame d'Étampes and her friend Longueval had escaped the prosecution for high treason with which they were threatened, and there were many others who were only too glad to follow their example. Thus, the most important of the fallen sultana's partisans, her uncle, the Cardinal de Meudon, obtained his pardon by ceding to the Cardinal de Guise his château of Meudon; while the Treasurer Duval, deprived of his place in the Council and menaced with a prosecution for malversation, saved himself by making over his châteaux of Dampierre and Chevreuse to the new cardinal. The greedy young prelate also succeeded in despoiling the Cardinal de Tournon of his charges of Chancellor of the Order of Saint-Michel and Master of the Chapel Royal, being determined that there should be no other French cardinals at the Court save those of the House of Lorraine, his uncle Jean and himself.

¹ *Mémoires de Vieilleville*. These *Mémoires*, it shall be remembered, were not written by the Maréchal de Vieilleville himself, but by his secretary, Vincent Carloix.

His Eminence's elder brother, the Duc d'Aumale, was no stranger to speculations of this nature. A wealthy lady, the Dame de Bavay, having sought his assistance to enable her to recover her daughter, who had been "wickedly and maliciously abducted" by an enterprising gentleman of the name of Rolle, the duke obtained an order from the King which obliged Rolle to restore the damsel to the arms of her sorrowing mother, from whom, we may presume, he received some very substantial token of gratitude; and, at the same time, permitted the abductor to purchase immunity by presenting him with the greater portion of his estates. He saved likewise from the punishment of his crimes the Comte de Grignan, governor of Provence, one of those chiefly responsible for the horrible atrocities committed upon the hapless Vaudois in 1545. In this instance, however, his greed overreached itself, since he accepted, as the price of his intervention, a will by which Grignan bequeathed to him the whole of his property, which comprised the estates of some of his victims. The testator, however, outlived the duke by some months, and, the influence of the Guises being momentarily eclipsed, the Parlement of Toulouse cancelled the will.

CHAPTER VIII

The Guises at the *Sacre* of Henri II—Affairs of Italy—Charles V and the Farnese—Mission of the Cardinal de Guise to Rome—Paul III and the cardinal endeavour to draw France into war with the Emperor—Their efforts frustrated by the Constable—Journey of Henri II to Piedmont—Dispute over precedence between Antoine de Bourbon, first Prince of the Blood, and the Duc d'Aumale—Revolt against the *gabelle*, or salt-tax, in the south-western provinces—Aumale quells the insurrection in Saintonge without cruelty—Brutal reprisals of Montmorency at Bordeaux—State entry of the King and Queen into Lyons—Glorification of Diane de Poitiers—Marriage of Antoine de Bourbon and Jeanne d'Albret—Marriage of the Duc d'Aumale and Anne d'Este—Birth of Henri de Lorraine.

THE Guises were much in evidence at the *Sacre* of Henri II, which took place at Rheims on July 26, 1547. The Cardinal de Guise, as Archbishop of Rheims, anointed the new King with the holy oil¹ and subsequently placed the sceptre and the Hand of Justice in his right and left hands, and the crown upon his head; while Ducs de Guise and d'Aumale, wearing "tunics of gold damask, reaching to the knee, mantles of scarlet and purple serge, with round capes trimmed with spotted ermine, and coronets on their heads enriched with gems of inestimable value," figured among the six lay peers who represented the six primitive lay peerages of Burgundy, Normandy, Aquitaine, Flanders, Champagne, and Toulouse.²

¹ A King of France was anointed in eight places: first, on the crown of the head; secondly, on the chest; thirdly, between the two shoulders; fourthly, on the right shoulder; fifthly, on the left shoulder; sixthly, on the bend of the right arm; seventhly, in the bend of the left arm; and, finally, after the slits in his *camisole*, which had been opened before the ceremony, had been closed, and he had been invested with all his Coronation robes, on the hands.

² The other four peers were Henri d'Albret, King of Navarre, and the Ducs de Vendôme, de Nevers, and de Montpensier!

On the conclusion of the official fêtes which followed the Coronation, the Court proceeded to Fontainebleau, where it remained during the rest of the year 1547 and the first months of 1548, save for visits to Montmorency's châteaux of Écouen and Chantilly for a series of grand hunting-parties organised by the Constable in honour of his Majesty. The new King, however, was by no means solely occupied by pleasure during this time, since the advisability of intervening in the affairs of Italy was being anxiously debated.

For Henri II desired to be King in Italy as well as in France, or, at any rate, he was determined to retain his hold upon Piedmont and to continue his friendly relations with those Italian States which resented the Imperial domination in the peninsula, so that, if a favourable opportunity of resuming his father's claims on the Milanese or Naples should present itself, he might be in a position to take advantage of it. And such an opportunity seemed to be at hand, since Italy was seething with intrigue and discontent.

The Emperor had pledged himself to advance the interest of Pope Paul III's family, and had married his natural daughter, Margaret of Austria, to Ottavio Farnese, the elder of the two sons of the Pontiff's rascally son, Pierluigi; but he hesitated to invest his son-in-law with Parma and Piacenza, and in 1545 Paul III, losing patience and feeling confident that the Emperor could not afford to quarrel with him, conferred these territories upon Pierluigi, whom Charles detested. As both Pope and Emperor claimed suzerainty over Parma and Piacenza, at the beginning of the following year a commission was appointed to inquire into the question, and decided that Pierluigi must not bear the title of duke without Charles's investiture. The chagrin of the Farnesi at this decision was changed to indignation when, three months later, the Emperor appointed their enemy, Ferrante Gonzaga, to the governorship of the Milanese, which they had coveted for themselves.

Pierluigi thereupon threw himself into the arms of France; a marriage was arranged between his younger son, Orazio, and the Dauphin's natural daughter, Diane¹; and insurrections, which were only with difficulty suppressed, were stirred up at Genoa and Naples. The Imperialists retaliated by intriguing against Pierluigi in Parma and Piacenza, where he was cordially hated, and inciting the nobles of those cities to rise against their tyrant.

Meanwhile, the Pope remained the professed ally of Charles V, though France did not despair of gaining him over; and, after the accession of Henri II, no time was lost in making advances to his Holiness, through the Ambassador to the Vatican and the French cardinals who were residing at Rome. Paul, however, seemed in no hurry to respond to them, and perhaps he would have hesitated to commit himself at all, had not a tragic event precipitated the desired *rapprochement*.

On September 10, 1547, the nobles of Piacenza rose against Pierluigi Farnese and assassinated him, and on the following day Ferrante Gonzaga occupied the city, in the name of the Emperor. Paul III, outraged at once in his affections and his ambitions, accused the viceroy of having incited the crime, and angrily demanded that the murdered man's elder son, Ottavio, should be established at Piacenza; and, on this demand being refused, vowed that he would suffer martyrdom rather than renounce his revenge, and declared himself ready to conclude an alliance with Henri II, the Swiss, and Venice. The Court of France made haste to strike while the iron was hot, and the Guises, eager for a war

¹ She was the daughter of a young Italian girl whom Henri had met during the campaign in Piedmont in the autumn of 1537, and whom historians call Filippa Duc. The fact that the child received the name of Diane and that when, some years later, she was brought to the French Court, the S  n  chale herself superintended her education, has led some writers to argue that Filippa Duc was a myth and that the girl was really the daughter of the favourite. The best-informed authorities on the period, however, follow tradition in accepting the Piedmontese origin of Diane de France.

which might afford them an opportunity to assert their cherished pretensions to the Kingdom of Naples, persuaded the King to despatch the Cardinal de Guise to Rome, under the pretext of receiving his hat from his Holiness's own hands, in order to confirm the Pope in his bellicose intentions. This he did so effectually that, at the end of October, he signed with him, in the name of France, a defensive alliance.

But for the interposition of Montmorency, war must certainly have followed, for the treaty just concluded was defensive in name only, and both Pope and cardinal made desperate efforts to induce Henri II to invade the Milanese, or to attack Genoa or Naples, and even recommended an alliance with the Turks and the piratical Dey of Algiers. The cardinal was particularly anxious for an expedition against Naples, in which he intended to play a leading part himself, assuring the King that the partisans of the House of Anjou there "would furnish him [the cardinal] with men and money, and establish him in the said kingdom, in order to give it to one of his brothers," and that the Grand Seigneur and the "King of Algiers" would be able to lend them forty or fifty galleys."

The Constable, however, employed all his influence to counteract the effect of those warlike counsels. The respect which he always entertained for the spiritual authority of the Holy See did not extend to the sacrifice of the interests of the State in order to promote the aggrandizement of its present occupant; and he foresaw that Paul III would probably be the sole gainer by the adventure in which he was so anxious to engage France. Nor was he by any means displeased to have an opportunity of thwarting his rivals, the Guises, and of procuring the condemnation of the work of the new cardinal. He accordingly represented to the King that it was impossible to repose any confidence in the Pope, whose conduct had, up to the present, been one long tissue of dissimulations, and who, while demanding that France

should take the offensive in order to recover Piacenza, refused to enthrone Orazio Farnese, his Majesty's future son-in-law at Parma, instead of Ottavio, the son-in-law of the Emperor.

The Constable's task was facilitated by the reports of the French Ambassador at Venice, who represented the Senate as but little inclined to engage in a league with a Pontiff of eighty-four, and on account of a quarrel more private than public; and the Guises, being themselves obliged reluctantly to admit the imprudence of beginning a war without the support of the Republic, Charles de Lorraine was recalled to France, and all idea of armed interference in the affairs of Italy was for the moment abandoned.

Nevertheless, in view of the troubles which were agitating Italy, Henri II considered it advisable to lose no time in going in person to secure the recognition of his authority beyond the Alps; and in April 1548 he set out for Piedmont, accompanied by the greater part of the Court and a considerable army. On his journey through the eastern provinces, which was performed by easy stages, he accepted the hospitality of the Duc de Guise at Joinville, by whom he was entertained magnificently.

At Chambéry—the ancient capital of the dukes of Savoy—which his Majesty honoured by a state entry, a sharp dispute over precedence arose between the Duc d'Aumale and the head of the House of Bourbon, Antoine de Vendôme. As first Prince of the Blood, the Duc de Vendôme had the privilege to walk or ride, as the case might be, first and alone after the Sovereign in all State processions, and was astonished to find the Lorraine prince by his side. He remonstrated, upon which Aumale replied that he was within his right, since Savoy was a conquered country, of which he was Governor and Lieutenant-General for the King, and that his Majesty had ordered him to take the place which he occupied. Vendôme was so indignant that he wished

to withdraw from the procession, but was recalled by the King. Those present merely considered that Aumale was "very much the slave of honours and glory," and did not understand the full significance of this pretension to suppress the privileges of the Princes of the Blood, and, with it, the interval which separated the Guises from the throne.

In the midst of the magnificent fêtes which followed Henri II's arrival at Turin, the alarming news arrived that the inhabitants of Guienne and Saintonge had risen in revolt against the *gabelle*, or salt tax,¹ and the tyrannical manner in which it was levied. The Comte de Moneins, the King's Lieutenant in Guienne, had been murdered by the populace of Bordeaux, together with a number of government officials and tax-collectors; while in Saintonge the rebels had sacked the houses of the officers of justice at Saintes and Cognac, assassinated the receiver of the *gabelle* and one of the chief *gabelleurs*, and broken open the storehouses and thrown the salt into the gutters.

The Court, although disagreeably surprised by the news from the south-western provinces, did not appear at first to realise the gravity of the movement. However, on learning of the rapid spread of the insurrection, Henri II decided to return to France, and in the first week in September he crossed the Alps.

On the King's arrival in Dauphiné, effective measures were at once taken. The Duc d'Aumale was despatched to Tours, where he took command of 4,000 *landsknechts*, and marched at their head on Poitiers, to attack the rebels from the north; while Montmorency, with

¹ Until the last years of the previous reign, the inhabitants of the south-western coasts, which were covered with salt-marshes, had been exempted from a part of this impost; but in 1541 François I, finding himself at the end of his resources, had decided that the *gabelle* should be levied equally in all parts of the kingdom. The salt of the Aquitaine marshes, on account of its superior quality, had been in great demand in England, Holland, and Northern Germany. But the increase of the tax had ruined the industry, and deprived thousands of poor people of their only means of livelihood.

1,000 men-at-arms, descended the Rhone to Nîmes, and advanced towards Bordeaux by way of Toulouse, being reinforced *en route* by levies from Languedoc and Guienne.

François de Lorraine had the humanity to pacify the country without massacres and without cruelty, and the good sense to make himself honoured for his clemency. He himself relates that he had been able to reduce Saintonge "without, nevertheless, the necessity of punishing rigorously those rebels, as the Constable did subsequently those of Bordeaux."¹

In Guienne, on the other hand, the repression of the revolt was carried out with atrocious brutality. By the time that Montmorency reached Toulouse, the authorities of Bordeaux had already succeeded in practically quelling the insurrection, and the First Président of the Parlement and the chief magistrates met him and assured him that there was now no longer any necessity for the employment of force to re-establish order. The Constable, dissimulating his intentions, sent them back "with the most soft and kindly words that it was possible to employ, in such wise that he greatly reassured them." But he soon changed his tone. At Langon, on the Gironde, he was met by a second deputation, which arrived in "a large and very magnificent barge, containing rooms and salons with glass windows, and painted in gold and azure, and decorated with his Arms." The deputation, after handing the Constable the keys of the town, advised him to embark on this barge, and to leave his troops behind him, since otherwise they would not be answerable for the conduct of the citizens. But there was no longer any need for Montmorency to dissemble, and he haughtily rejected the proposal, declaring, with a wave of his hand towards the cannon which he had brought with him, that he possessed keys which would open the most obstinate gates.

¹ Guise, *Mémoires-journaux*.



ANNE, DUC DE MONTMORENCY, CONSTABLE OF FRANCE.

On October 19, he entered Bordeaux with his whole force, and exacted a terrible retribution for the atrocities committed during the insurrection. Nearly one hundred and fifty "makers and authors of sedition" were condemned to death, and the executions, if we are to believe the Vieilleville *Mémoires*, were marked by the most revolting brutality, the judges and the provost-marshal showing a diabolical ingenuity in the punishment they devised for the most guilty of the offenders. The condemned were "hanged, decapitated, broken on the wheel, impaled, dismembered by four horses, and burned at the stake, and then were put to death in a manner whereof we have never heard any one speak, which was called 'mailloter.' They were attached by the middle of the body to a scaffold, face downwards, their arms and legs being left at liberty, and the executioner, with an iron pestle, broke and crushed the limbs, without breaking either the head or the body. The youngest of the offenders were, "on account of their youth, only whipped." All the inhabitants, men and women, were compelled to go and kneel before the decomposing body of the unfortunate Comte de Moneins—which, according to De Thou, they were compelled to exhume with their nails, for interment in the Cathedral of Saint-André, and make publicly the *amende honorable* for the crime committed. This repulsive ceremony was particularly trying for the young girls, who were marked down by the soldiers, followed, and grossly maltreated. Vieilleville made many enemies in the army, and was regarded as a singular character, because he protected from outrage the daughters and nieces of a counsellor of the Parlement of Bordeaux upon whom he was billeted. He was obliged to call his company to arms to save the poor girls from violation.

The disturbances in the south-western provinces did not in any way affect the loyalty of other parts of the kingdom, and, on his return from Italy, as on his journey thither, Henri II was received everywhere with en-

thusiastic demonstrations. On September 21, he arrived at Ainay, where he was joined by the Queen and Diane de Poitiers, and two days later made his "superb and triumphal entry into the noble and ancient city of Lyons."¹

The most notable feature of this pageant was the public recognition by the citizens of the second town in the kingdom of the unique position occupied by the Duchesse de Valentinois. From Ainay, their Majesties journeyed down the Rhone to Vaise, where a splendid pavilion had been made ready for their reception. But what was the astonishment and mortification of Catherine to perceive, on entering it, that it was not herself but Diane whom the Lyonnais desired to honour, after the King! The doors, the windows, the walls, the very chair on which she sat, all bore the H. and D. interlaced—the monogram of her husband and his mistress—which from the first weeks of the reign had appeared on the royal liveries, and which was to figure on the walls of the Louvre and of every public building erected in France during the next ten years. The mistress had expressed to her royal lover her desire that her supremacy should be acknowledged in the provinces, and, by his Majesty's orders, the Maréchal de Saint-André, Sénéchal of the Lyonnais, had obligingly arranged the matter with the complaisant burghers, only too willing to gratify their Sovereign and her whom he delighted to honour. Never before, and never again, had a Queen of France to submit to so cruel a humiliation; not even the long-suffering consort of Louis XV!

And, within the town, where, on passing the gates, the royal guests suddenly found themselves in an artificial forest, it was the same. Through the trees came a group of nymphs, and their leader—a girl of striking beauty—represented the goddess of the chase, with bow

¹ *La Magnificence de la superbe et triumpante entrée de la noble et antique cité de Lyon faite au trèschrestien roy de France, Henri deuxiesme de ce nom, et au reyne Catherine son espouse le xxiii septembre, 1548 (Lyon, 1549).*

in hand and quiver on shoulder. She held a tame lion by a silver chain, and, leading the great beast to the King, begged him, in appropriate verses, to accept at her hands the town of Lyons. Everywhere, too, mocking and exultant, was the monogram to be seen: on the magnificent triumphal arches and obelisks, engravings of several of which have been preserved, on the draperies which hung from the windows, on the flags which floated on the breeze. Catherine made her entry, the day after her husband, borne on an open litter, and so covered with diamonds that the eye grew tired in gazing at her, but infinitely less remarked than the real heroine of the fête, riding behind her on a palfrey, modestly dressed in black and white.

From Lyons, the King and Court proceeded to Moulins, to assist at the marriage of the Duc de Vendôme and Henri's cousin, Jeanne d'Albret, only child of the King and Queen of Navarre. In 1536 Jeanne, notwithstanding her vehement protests, in which she persisted up to the very last moment, had been married to Guillaume de la Marck, Duke of Clèves, then in rebellion against his suzerain. Owing, however, to the tender age of the little bride, the marriage was not consummated at the time, and in 1545 the Duke of Clèves having, in the meantime, made his peace with Charles V and deserted the side of France, it was annulled. Both François de Lorraine and Antoine de Bourbon had aspired to the hand of the young heiress of Navarre, which was also coveted by the Emperor for his son Philip, in order to consecrate his possession of Upper Navarre, which Ferdinand the Catholic had conquered in 1512, and acquire, by the annexation of Béarn, an advance post in the middle of Southern France. The disposal of the girl's hand was, therefore, a matter of vital importance, and, with the object of checkmating the Imperial designs, Henri II had, to the intense mortification of her parents, who favoured the Spanish match, insisted on her marrying one of her French suitors.

Although she possessed little of her mother, Marguerite d'Angoulême's, sweetness of disposition, Jeanne had all her intelligence, together with an infinitely greater strength and independence of character; and she did not hesitate to declare that she would never consent, by marrying the Duc d'Aumale, to become the sister-in-law of a daughter of Diane de Poitiers. Thus the haughty young princess brought, as a dowry to her successful suitor, the hatred of the favourite, of Diane's daughters, and of the Guises.

This alliance, from which was born the future Henri IV, made Antoine heir to the crown of Navarre and materially increased the importance of the Bourbons; but they had little ambition and less capacity, and their rivals, the Guises, who possessed both, had already negotiated a marriage which was to counter-balance that of the Duc de Vendôme. For, though the Cardinal de Guise had failed in his efforts to draw France into another war with Charles V, his sojourn in Italy had not been altogether barren of result. On his homeward journey he had visited Ferrara, whose ruler, Hercule d'Este, had married, in 1527, Renée de France, younger daughter of Louis XII, and, on behalf of his brother Aumale, had demanded of the Duke and Duchess the hand of their eldest daughter, Anne d'Este.¹

There was a rival candidate in the field, in the person of Sigismund I, King of Poland; but the cardinal's persuasive tongue and the natural inclination of Renée de France for a son-in-law from her own country caused the Lorraine prince to be preferred to the Polish monarch. Early in the autumn of 1548, Anne d'Este set out for France, accompanied by an imposing suite. Her future husband, being then engaged in suppressing the insurrection in the south-western provinces, was unable to

¹ The Duke and Duchess of Ferrara had six children: Alphonso, who succeeded his father; Ludovico, Cardinal of Ferrara; Anne, who married François de Lorraine, and, after his death, Jacques de Savoie, Duc de Nemours; Lucretia, Duchess of Urbino; Marfiso, Marquis of Carrara; and Bradamante, Countess Bevilacqua.

welcome her ; but the Duc de Guise and Charles de Lorraine met her at Grenoble and escorted her to Fontainebleau, where, on December 4, the marriage was celebrated with great splendour, in the presence of the King and Queen and the whole Court. The bride received a dowry of 150,000 livres, but, in accordance with a then very general custom, renounced any further claims upon her father's property ; while Henri II, by letters-patent, settled upon the newly married pair a sum of 10,000 livres a year, in discharge of a sum of 50,000 livres which François I had borrowed from the late Duke of Ferrara, at the time of the campaign of Pavia, half a century earlier, and omitted to repay.

Anne d'Este, who, at the time of her marriage, was barely eighteen, was one of the most charming young princesses of her time. Brantôme declares that she was "the most beautiful woman of the Court, and it is possible that, even if I said of Christendom, I should not lie" ; and Ronsard wrote of her :

Vénus la sainte en ses graces habite,
Tous les amours logent en ses regards :
Pour ce, à bon droit, telle dame mérite
D'avoir esté femme de nostre Mars.

Brought up in the midst of the most cultured Court in Italy, she was also very accomplished, being an excellent classical scholar and acquainted with several modern languages ; while she was as amiable as she was beautiful and accomplished. She made Guise an excellent wife, who was entirely devoted to his interests, and whose intelligence enabled her frequently to give him valuable counsel and to act as a useful and judicious intermediary in the relations which he had to maintain with so many persons both at home and abroad.

A little more than a year after her marriage (December 31, 1550), Anne d'Este gave birth to a son at the Château of Joinville. This little boy was Henri de Lorraine, the Guise of the Estates of Blois.

CHAPTER IX

Strained relations between France and England—Mary Stuart and Edward VI—Project of the Guises to marry the little Queen of Scotland to the Dauphin—Invasion of Scotland by the Protector Somerset and Battle of Pinkie—The Scots decide to throw themselves into the arms of France, and offer the hand of Mary to the Dauphin—Despatch of a French expedition to Scotland—Convention of Haddington—Mary Stuart is brought to France—Favourable impression created by the little Queen—The War of Boulogne—Restoration of the town to France—Illness and death of Claude de Lorraine, Duc de Guise—Suspensions of poisoning—Sudden death of the Cardinal Jean de Lorraine—The obsequies of Guise are celebrated with veritably royal pomp—Mausoleum erected for her husband and herself by Antoinette de Bourbon—Character of the first Duc de Guise—Disposal of his property—The immense benefices of the Cardinal Jean shared by his nephews Charles and Louis de Lorraine—The wealth and influence of the Guises increased rather than diminished by the death of the two chiefs of their House.

MEANWHILE, important questions of foreign policy had again been engaging the attention of Henri II and his Ministers.

In 1546, François I had concluded a treaty with England, whereby Boulogne was to be left in English possession for eight years, at the expiration of which it was to be restored to France, on payment of 800,000 crowns, the English undertaking that, while the town remained in their occupation, no fresh fortifications should be erected. But the frontier line of the tract of country which had been surrendered with Boulogne had been left undetermined at the peace, and though, soon after the accession of Henri II, the English and French commissioners employed on the survey arrived at a settlement, the new King declined to ratify it. The Protector, Somerset, retaliated by running out a long embankment towards the sea. "It is but a jetty to amend the haven, and to save both your ships and

ours," said the English. But, since it was quite obviously intended to carry cannon and command the approaches to the harbour, the French protested warmly against it as a breach of the treaty ; and the relations of the two Governments became very strained indeed.

The ill-feeling was intensified by the affairs of Scotland. James V had died in 1542, leaving Marie de Lorraine with an infant daughter, the hapless Mary Stuart, born only a few days previously, as the sole surviving issue of their marriage. The following year, the Scottish Assembly, in which the party favourable to England predominated, promised the hand of the little Queen to the heir of the English crown ; but French influence prevented the fulfilment of this engagement, and Cardinal Beaton and the Catholic party drew the country into another war with the neighbouring kingdom. The engagement, however, had never been legally cancelled, and no sooner had Edward VI ascended the throne of England than, in accordance with the dying instructions of the late King, the Duke of Somerset demanded that it should be executed.

Meantime, Henri II had become King of France, and the brothers of the Queen-dowager of Scotland had risen to power. The Guises were quick to perceive how greatly a marriage between their niece and the Dauphin would add to their own influence and importance ; and they urged the King to this step, as the only means of preventing the marriage of Mary and Edward VI and the union of the two crowns. The project of the Guises accorded too closely with the traditional policy of France to meet with any opposition from the King, and even the Constable, much as he might fear the increase of his rivals' influence, felt obliged to express his approval.

The haughty and ambitious temper of Somerset materially aided their plans. Instead of being content to exercise patience and to confine himself to supporting the English party in Scotland, in which case

it is almost certain that a very few years would have witnessed the extinction of French influence in the northern kingdom, and with it all opposition to the marriage of the little Queen to Edward VI, he resolved to employ force. At the beginning of September, he crossed the border at the head of an army of 18,000 men, and a few days later inflicted a sanguinary defeat upon the Scots at Pinkie Cleugh, near Musselburgh.

This defeat, so far from obliging the Scots to sue for peace, decided them to throw themselves without reserve into the arms of France; and the nobility, on the entreaty of the Queen-dowager, offered the hand of Mary to the Dauphin, and consented that the little Queen should be brought up at the French Court until she had reached a marriageable age. Henri II immediately accepted the offer, and promised to make Scotland's cause his own; and in June 1549 a French expedition, consisting of sixty transports and twenty-two galleys, with 6,000 men on board, sailed from Brest.

The French troops landed at Leith, and, having been joined by a Scottish army, proceeded to lay siege to Haddington, which the English had captured and garrisoned. Here, on July 7, amid the ruins of an abbey which the invaders had destroyed, was held a "Parliament of all the Estates," known as the Convention of Haddington, when it was agreed that the crowns of France and Scotland were to be formally and for ever united, though Scotland was to retain her ancient laws and liberties, and that the little Queen should be brought up at the French Court with the children of Henri II until her marriage.¹

This decision, as Froude and other historians have shown, was not arrived at with the unanimity which the formal records of the convention might lead us to suppose,

¹ It may be well to give here the list of the children of Henri II and Catherine de' Medici:

1. François, born at Fontainebleau, January 17, 1543; married, April 24,

for there were not wanting those who believed that a union with France constituted as grave a menace to Scottish independence as a union with England; and Marie de Lorraine, fearing that, when the exasperation caused by recent events had abated, the Estates might repent of their present decision, determined to remove her daughter forthwith beyond the reach of the English. Instructions were therefore sent to Villegaignon, the commander of the French squadron, who lay with his galleys in the harbour of Leith, to proceed to Dumbarton, whither the young Queen had been sent for security after the disaster of Pinkie, to take her and her suite on board, and convey her straight to France. That resourceful sailor at once put to sea, and, by steering a southward course, deluded the English ships which were waiting at the mouth of the Forth into the belief that he was making for the French coast. But, when night fell, he put about, and, rounding the Orkneys, reached the Clyde.

Accompanied by Artus de Brézé, Henri II's Ambassador to the Scottish Court, and a numerous suite—which included her half-brother, Lord James Stuart (the future

1558, Mary Stuart, Queen of Scots; became King, July 10, 1559; died at Orléans, November 17, 1560.

2. Elisabeth, born at Fontainebleau, April 2, 1545; married, July 1559, Philip II of Spain; died, October 3, 1568.

3. Claude, born at Fontainebleau, November 12, 1547; married, 1559, Charles, Duke of Lorraine.

4. Louis, born at Saint-Germain-en-Laye, February 3, 1548; died October 25, 1550.

5. Charles Maximilian, born at Saint-Germain-en-Laye, June 27, 1550; became King of France, November 27, 1560; married Isabella of Austria, October 22, 1570; died May 30, 1574.

6. Édouard Alexandre (Henri III), born at Fontainebleau, September 24, 1551; King of Poland, 1573; King of France, 1574; married, February 15, 1575, Louise de Lorraine; died at Saint-Cloud, August 2, 1589.

7. Marguerite (the celebrated "Queen Margot"), born at Saint-Germain-en-Laye, May 14, 1553; married, August 18, 1572, Henri de Bourbon, King of Navarre (Henri IV of France); died March 27, 1615.

8. Hercule (François, Duc d'Alençon, and later Duc d'Anjou), born at Fontainebleau, July 24, 1554; died at Château-Thierry, June 10, 1584.

9. Victoire, born at Fontainebleau, July 24, 1556; died at Amboise on August 17 of the same year.

10. Jeanne, born the same day, ten hours after her sister; died immediately.

Regent Murray), and Janet Stuart, Lady Fleming, a natural daughter of James IV, of whom more anon—the little Queen embarked in Villegaignon's galley, and the Admiral at once put to sea again. Shortly after leaving the Clyde, an English squadron was sighted; but, favoured by the wind, the French galleys easily outstripped the enemy's ships, and on August 20 Mary disembarked at the little port of Roscoff, on the coast of Finisterre.

From Roscoff, the little Queen was conducted by easy stages to Nantes, and thence by barge up the Loire to Orléans, where the land journey was resumed. At Tours, she was met by her grandmother, the Duchesse de Guise, who describes her, in a letter to the Queen-dowager of Scotland, as "very pretty indeed, and as intelligent a child as one could wish to see," and expresses the opinion that "when she developed, she would be a handsome girl."¹ The duchess accompanied her the rest of the way to Saint-Germain-en-Laye, which was reached about the middle of October.

At the moment of Mary's arrival, the Court was at Moulins, but, soon after the marriage of Antoine de Bourbon and Jeanne d'Albret, Henri II set out for Saint-Germain, accompanied by only a few of his Household, "to see Messeigneurs his children and to enjoy their company alone." He arrived on November 9 and was quite charmed with his future daughter-in-law, whom he pronounced "the most perfect child that he had ever seen."

In a letter to Marie de Lorraine, written about a month later, Henri II describes a piquant incident which took place at the marriage-fêtes of the Duc d'Aumale and Anne d'Este, the first Court function at which the little Queen assisted:—

"I shall certainly wish you to know, Madame, my good sister, that I had invited to the nuptials of my cousin the Duc Daumale [d'Aumale], your brother, all the Ambassadors of the princes, who are with me [*i.e.*

¹ Marquis de Pimodan, *la Mère des Guises: Antoinette de Bourbon*.

at the Court] not omitting him of England,¹ in whose presence I made my son the Dauphin dance with my daughter the Queen of Scotland. And, as he was conversing with the Emperor's Ambassador, my cousin the Cardinal de Guise approached him, to whom I remarked that it was a pretty sight to see them. And my said cousin responded that it was a fine marriage, to which the said Ambassador merely replied that it gave him great pleasure to watch them. Yet I will wager my life that he did not find much therein, and as little in the caresses which he saw me bestow upon them. Such Madame, my good sister, are the tidings of our little household. I wished to tell you them, so that you may experience yonder something of the pleasure that I enjoy constantly, and which increases from day to day, when I see my daughter and yours improving continually, which is the greatest satisfaction that I can have."

In the late summer of 1549, Henri II, encouraged by the rebellion in England, and anxious to avenge the repulse which he had suffered before Boulogne, five years before, invaded the Boulonnais in person, at the head of a considerable army. The outlying forts, which guarded the approach to the town, were soon taken, and the communications of Boulogne with the Calais coast completely cut off. But the strength of the garrison and the formidable batteries erected by Henry VIII rendered an assault an extremely hazardous undertaking; while the approach of winter made the King reluctant to undertake a regular siege. He therefore decided to content himself with a blockade, con-

¹ Despite the intervention of France in the war between England and Scotland, Henri II and Edward VI were still nominally at peace; indeed, it was not until the autumn of 1549 that the English Government recalled its Ambassador, and "for their late manifold injuries, and also for that, contrary to faith, honour, and godliness, the French King had taken away the young Scottish Queen, the King's Majesty's spouse . . . did intimate and declare him and all his subjects to be enemies of the King's Majesty of England."

fident that, by the spring, Boulogne, hemmed in as it now was on all sides, would be reduced to such straits that it must fall an easy prey.

In January 1550, the English Government despatched a force of 5,000 men to the assistance of the beleaguered garrison. But those reinforcements were merely intended to secure honourable terms of surrender; for Somerset had now fallen, and his successor, the Earl of Warwick, recognised that it was impossible to hope for any improvement in the internal condition of England while the constant drain on the resources of the nation caused by the war with France continued. Towards the end of February, a truce of a fortnight was concluded, and a month later (March 24) peace was signed, England agreeing to restore Boulogne within six months, in return for a sum of 400,000 crowns. Scotland was included in the peace.

On April 25, the Constable's eldest son, François de Montmorency, Lieutenant-General of Picardy, took possession of Boulogne, in the name of Henri II, and on Ascension Day (May 15), the King made a state entry into the town, and, in accordance with a vow which he had made two years before, declared the Holy Virgin sovereign of the Boulonnais, and presented the cathedral with an image of the Virgin three feet four inches in height, of massive silver.

A few days before the restoration of Boulogne to France, the House of Guise had sustained a severe loss by the death of its founder, who terminated his career of almost unbroken good-fortune at Joinville, "*très plein de gloire, de renom, et de beaux-faits*,"¹ on April 12, 1550, at the comparatively early age of fifty-three.

Early in February, at the conclusion of a short visit to Fontainebleau, where the Court was then in residence, Claude de Lorraine became seriously unwell. He was conveyed by easy stages back to Joinville, where

¹ Brantôme.

it was hoped his health would improve, but he gradually grew worse, and towards the end of March the doctors who attended him, and who appear to have failed entirely to diagnose the nature of the malady, pronounced his recovery hopeless, and advised that his children should be summoned. Of his six sons, only the Duc d'Aumale and the youngest, René, a lad of fourteen, happened to be then in France; the Cardinal de Guise and Louis, Bishop of Albi, were at Rome, as was their uncle, the Cardinal Jean; the Marquis of Mayenne was in Scotland; while the Grand Prior had gone to Malta on business connected with his Order. René was with his parents at Joinville, and the Duchesse de Guise despatched a courier to the Court to summon the future head of the family. D'Aumale, though ill himself, at once set out for Champagne. He was obliged, however, to break his journey, and his mother, learning of this, wrote begging him not to continue it, unless he found himself well enough to travel.

"My son, my friend," she writes, "if Fortune does me the wrong of taking him [her husband] from me, I will do with the honest people that I have here the best that I can, and you shall be advised of everything. For, my friend, after God, I can have no hope and consolation save in you and my other children. I cannot be without grief so great that in truth I have as much as I can bear of it. Your good mother, Anthoinette."

Happily, after resting a day or two, Aumale was able to take the road again, and arrived in time to bid farewell to his father.

Always at bottom a sincerely religious man, Guise in his last years had become very devout, and, "to punish himself for the errors of his youth, wore constantly at the top of his left arm an iron circlet, which galled the flesh." His end was marked by a Christian resignation and a calm fortitude which never failed him, even in the midst of the most cruel sufferings. He passed the time in devotional exercises, hearing Mass each day,

and afterwards religious exhortations, and reciting psalms and prayers. Antoinette de Bourbon, who watched continually by his pillow, only left him to assist at the processions intended to pray for his cure. At the point of death, the Duc de Guise rose from his bed to receive with great devotion the Holy Viaticum, which was brought to him by the Dean of Saint-Laurent. Then, having returned to bed, he exclaimed: "If it please God, I am departing to go and join the saints."¹

In taking a last farewell of his sons, the Duc d'Aumale and René de Lorraine, he expressed his fear that the proximity to Geneva might cause the French to be deceived again by the New Religion, "which desired to destroy the august Sacrament, wherein, in dying, he himself had found such divine consolation," and he charged them "to sacrifice everything—their property and their lives—if the kingdom happened to fall again into this disgrace." Aumale was especially directed to communicate the paternal wish to his absent brothers.²

Finally, he requested that Aumale's infant son should be brought to him, and, when the child was placed in his arms, kissed him and predicted that "he would not degenerate."

A few minutes before the end came, the dying man said to his wife: "I know not the one who gave me the deadly morsel, or whether he be great or little; even if he be here present, and I were able to name him, I should not accuse him. Moreover, I should pray for him, and treat him well, and pardon him my death, as heartily as I pray my Saviour to pardon my sins."

These solemn, though generous, words prove that the duke was firmly convinced that he had been poisoned, and this belief was undoubtedly shared by those about him. Claude Guillauld, a learned doctor of the Sorbonne, who preached his funeral sermon, declared that he died from "a malady inflicted upon him by an anti-

¹ Bouillé.

² Fournier.

³ Marquis de Pimodan, *la Mère des Guises*.

Christ and minister of Satan, and such as the physicians knew to have been engendered by poison"; while his relatives caused the following inscription to be placed upon his coffin: "Here lies the very high and very puissant Claude de Lorraine, son of René of Cecile [Sicily], in his life Duc de Guise, who died the 12th of April, 1550, at Joinville, *from poison*."

During Guise's recent visit to the Court at Fontainebleau, he had been consulted by the King in reference to an appeal that had been received from the French party at Genoa to assist them in shaking off the Imperial yoke; and it was rumoured that the crime was the work of an agent of the Emperor in that city, who had come to France to watch events and knew that the duke was urging Henri II to intervene. But, though poison was a recognised instrument of diplomacy in the sixteenth century, there do not appear to be any sufficient grounds for believing that it was employed in this instance; and, as there is no record of an autopsy being held, history rightly hesitates to endorse contemporary opinion. It should, moreover, be remembered that it was an age when the deaths of notable persons were continually being attributed to foul play, and that doctors were only too ready to talk of poison, in order to excuse their own incapacity to diagnose their patients' maladies.

A month after the death of Guise, the family sustained another loss by the death of the Cardinal Jean de Lorraine. The cardinal was returning from Rome, where he had been taking part in the Conclave necessitated by the death, in the previous autumn, of Paul III, and which had resulted in the election of the Cardinal del Monte (Julius III) to the Papal chair. On his arrival at Lyons, he learned of the death of his brother, which appears to have greatly affected him; and, some days later, while at supper at Nogent-sur-Yonne, he had an attack of apoplexy, from which he died the same night.

One of the last acts of the Cardinal Jean had borne

witness to his constant and enlightened enthusiasm for science and literature, and atoned for not a little that was evil in his life. It was at his earnest solicitation, supported by the efforts of his nephew, the Cardinal de Guise, that the University of Rheims had been founded. This project had encountered strenuous opposition from the Parlement of Paris, and, though the Bull authorising its establishment had been promulgated by Paul III, in 1547, it was not until January 1550, and on the express command of Henri II, that that body consented to register it.

As it had been decided to postpone the funeral of Guise until the absent members of the family had returned to take part in it, the body of the duke was embalmed and deposited in the Church of Saint-Laurent, in a chapel draped with black velvet, decorated with the coats-of-arms of the various royal Houses from which he claimed descent. A month later, that of the Cardinal Jean was brought from Nogent-sur-Yonne by the Cardinal de Guise and the Bishop of Albi and placed beside it. "Every morning, two high masses were chanted very solemnly for the two brothers, and every morning, at the conclusion of the second mass, the very virtuous Duchesse de Guise failed not to come and sprinkle holy water."¹ After lying in state for forty days, the remains of the cardinal were conveyed to Nancy and buried in the church of the Franciscan convent of that town. The body of the duke had been, meanwhile, removed to the neighbouring convent of Notre Dame de Pitié, which had been founded by him, where it was deposited upon an immense state bed, in the principal guest-chamber, to await interment.

On July 1, the Marquis de Mayenne and the Grand Prior having by this time returned to France, the obsequies of the duke were celebrated with a veritably royal pomp, which the friendship of Henri II for the new head of the family had induced him very imprudently to authorise; indeed, we are assured that—

. . . depuis Charlemagne
 Tel duc ne fut (presens tous ses parens)
 Mieulx inhumé n'y actes apparens
 De sa grandeur mieulx observer en sōme,
 Pour demonstrier les estatz différens
 Entre un grand prince, un bourgeois, et un simple homme.¹

Twelve criers headed the procession from the convent to the château, sounding their hand-bells and calling out at intervals: "Monseigneur le duc de Guise is dead; pray God for his soul!" Then came a hundred poor men clothed in black, each carrying a lighted taper in his hand, followed by a similar number dressed in white; the clergy of Joinville and the neighbourhood; the high bailiff of Joinville and the officers of justice; the deputies from the Estates of Burgundy; the officials of the deceased prince's Household, the lackeys walking with their hands crossed upon their breasts, to indicate that their master had no longer need of their services; an equerry leading Guise's great war-horse, "barded for battle"; seven gentlemen bearing the duke's spurs, gauntlets, lance, and so forth; the banner of Lorraine, followed by the eight banners of the "lines paternal" and "lines maternal"; the pennant of the House of Guise; the duke's company of men-at-arms; the King-at-Arms of Lorraine, Edmond du Boullay, the author of *le très excellent Enterrement*; the duke's chief equerry, leading his *cheval d'honneur*—the horse he rode on state occasions—its magnificent trappings supported by four lackeys; the Kings-at-arms of France, and twenty gentlemen bearing on their shoulders the great state bed, upon which was the effigy of the duke, and beneath it his coffin, the pall of which was supported by four knights of the Order of Saint-Michel. Finally, came the princes and great nobles or their representatives, conspicuous amongst whom was the Comte de Brienne,

¹ *Le très excellent Enterrement du très hault et très illustre prince Claude de Lorraine, duc de Guyse et d'Aumale, pair de France, auquel sont déclarées toutes les cérémonies . . . par Edmond du Boullay, roy d'armes de Lorraine.* A Paris. En la boutique d'Arnauld l'Anglier, au second pilier, en la grande salle du Palais.

of the House of Luxembourg, a relative of the widowed Duchesse de Guise, who, "as a particular mark of his affection," had brought with him "twenty-five poor men, dressed in mourning at his own expense."

After the funeral service, which was performed by the Cardinal de Givry, the body was laid to rest in a chapel of the church of Saint-Laurent, known at that time as the "Holy Chapel," from the number of relics which it contained, but at a later date as the "Chapel of the Princes," on account of its tombs. Then the King-at-Arms of Lorraine stepped forward and cried: "Silence! Silence! Silence! The very illustrious Prince Claude de Lorraine, Duc de Guise, and d'Aumale, Marquis de Mayenne, Baron de Joinville, etc., etc., is dead. . . . Claude de Lorraine, Duc de Guise, peer of France, is dead. . . . Monseigneur le Duc de Guise is dead, and his ecclesiastical ceremonies are finished. Pray God for his soul!"

Then, turning towards the new Duc de Guise, he continued: "Long live the very high, very puissant, and very illustrious François de Lorraine, Duc de Guise, peer of France, etc., etc., eldest son and principal heir of the very illustrious prince of immortal memory, to-day buried. Long live Monseigneur le duc François!"

The last ceremony of all took place in the great dining-hall of the château (the Salle des États), after the chief mourners had dined, when Marinville, captain of the Château of Montéclair and *maître d'hôtel* to the late duke, solemnly broke his bâton of office in two, and cast the pieces into the middle of the hall, to symbolise the breaking up of his master's Household, while the King-at-Arms cried: "The very high and very illustrious Prince Claude de Lorraine, Duc de Guise, is dead, and his Household is dispersed. Let each one provide for himself."¹

¹ In point of fact, none of Guise's servants were required to do this, as the more elderly were handsomely pensioned, and the others taken into the service of the new duke or of his brothers.

Antoinette de Bourbon subsequently erected for her husband and herself a mausoleum "in black and white marble, jasper, alabaster, and porphyry, one of the most magnificent tombs of France, ornamented with a number of beautiful sculptures, representing the battles, skirmishes, and captures of towns in which the late duke had taken part. Above the tomb were their statues, recumbent, and within the chapel four marble statues representing the four virtues, which supported a stone cornice on which were statues in white marble of Claude de Lorraine and Antoinette de Bourbon, each clothed with the ducal mantle, kneeling in prayer. One saw there also the helmet, sword, and gauntlets which the duke had used, and also his spurs."¹ On the monument was engraved a Latin epitaph, of which the following is a translation: "To the memory of Claude de Lorraine, very wealthy prince, having acquired the name of the father of the country, for the signal victory which he gained over the heretical enemies at Saverne, town of Alsace, and for having preserved the inhabitants of Burgundy and Flanders; who died prematurely, to the great grief and sorrow of all."²

There was far less exaggeration in this assertion than might be supposed, for Guise's good qualities had more than redeemed his faults, at any rate in the estimation of his contemporaries, and he had enjoyed great popularity, not only with the Parisians, but in Champagne and Burgundy; while by his family and his dependents he had been sincerely beloved. He was an excellent husband, notwithstanding his occasional infidelities, a kind and affectionate father and a good master, and if, as we have seen, he never allowed an opportunity to pass of enriching himself, it must be admitted that he was very generous, pensioning old servants, undertaking the charge of orphans, providing dowries for the daughters of his dependents, and disbursing considerable

¹ *Bibliothèque Nationale MSS., cartul. de Joinville.*

² Du Boullay.

sums in charity. Although as a young man, at the brilliant Court of François I, when he had still, so to speak, his way to make in the world, he had been noted for the magnificence of his dress and surroundings, this magnificence had been affected rather for the purpose of enhancing his own importance and ingratiating himself with the splendour-loving monarch than from any taste for ostentation, and, in his later years, at Joinville, he lived with his family in so modest and simple a manner that the château is said to have been more like a monastery than the residence of a great noble. Of plain food there was never any stint, and tables were laid in the banqueting-hall for any of his suite who might care to dine there, or for any chance guests who might arrive ; but the duke entertained a positive horror of drunkenness, and insisted on a rigid sobriety on the part of those about him. His favourite diversion was the chase, which he regarded as a necessary preparation for the fatigues of war ; and he was particularly fond of hawking, a sport which he followed with such enthusiasm that the Huguenots, in after years, nicknamed his children " the falconer's sons." He was also an excellent judge of a horse, and his stables contained some of the finest animals to be found in France.

Thanks to the fact that the Church or the Order of St. John of Jerusalem had already provided for three of the Guise brothers and their two unmarried sisters,¹ it had been only necessary for the deceased duke to make provision for the three princes who were " of the world." François de Lorraine, who now became Duc de Guise, of course, inherited the bulk of the family estates. Claude, Marquis de Mayenne, the son-in-law of Diane

¹ Renée de Lorraine was Abbess of Saint-Pierre de Reims, and Antoinette of the Abbey of Formoustier. The second sister, Louise, with whom, it will be remembered, Henry VIII had once contemplated sharing his throne, had died in 1542. She had been twice married ; first, to René de Nassau, Prince of Orange, and, secondly, to Charles de Cröy, Prince de Chimay and Duc d'Aerschot, who survived her.

de Poitiers, received the duchy of Aumale, the lands comprised in the bailliwick of Caux in Normandy, and which his elder brother had agreed to abandon to him, together with the title; and was henceforth known as Duc d'Aumale. René had for his share the marquisate of Elbeuf and the rest of the Norman estates, with the exception of Caux. The two dukes shared the other dignities of their father between them. To François fell the office of Grand Huntsman of France and the government of Champagne; while Claude received the government of Burgundy.

In like manner, the Cardinal de Guise and the Bishop of Albi divided the innumerable benefices of the Cardinal Jean, almost entirely reserved for them by the royal favour, though his Eminence naturally received the lion's share of the spoil. He now assumed his uncle's title of Cardinal de Lorraine; while Louis, who shortly afterwards became, in his turn, a member of the Sacred College, took that of Cardinal de Guise.

Thus, the disappearance of the two chiefs of the House of Guise in no wise diminished its wealth and influence; indeed, it materially increased both. For the second Duc de Guise and the second Cardinal de Lorraine had more ability, more ambition, more energy, more courage, and, it must be added, more rapacity than those whom they had replaced. They were supported by their younger brothers, as ambitious and greedy as they were, and skilful in securing adherents for their common party. All lived together in the greatest intimacy and worked together as one man for the aggrandizement of their House. Never, perhaps, in the case of a family, has the axiom "Union is strength" been more strikingly exemplified. For the good of the common cause each one was ready to sacrifice his private inclinations, his personal ambitions. The new Duc d'Aumale himself, though a peer of France like his eldest brother, never sought to detach his own interests from his, or to found a rival House. It was the House of Guise alone which

he desired to support and exalt ; and each of his brothers kept the same object steadily before him. Every morning, the four younger princes met in the Cardinal de Lorraine's apartments, and followed him to the *lever* of the head of the family, from which all the six proceeded in a body to that of the King.

CHAPTER X

The Guises endeavour to provoke a fresh rupture with England, but are foiled by the efforts of the Constable—Montmorency is created duke and peer of France—Attitude of Diane de Poitiers towards the Constable and the Guises—*Liaison* of Henri II with Lady Fleming, governess of Mary Stuart—Birth of a son—Indiscretions of Lady Fleming, who is dismissed from Court—Political importance of this affair—Arrogance and ambition of the Guises, who resolve to draw France into another war with Charles V—Critical relations between France and the Emperor—The War of Parma—Affairs of Germany—Negotiations between France and the Lutheran Princes—Treaty of Chambord—Popularity of the war in France—Part played by the new Duc de Guise in the organisation of the army for the invasion of Lorraine and Alsace—French plan of campaign—The Constable takes Metz by stratagem—Guise prevents the annexation of Lorraine—Invasion of Alsace—Remonstrances of the German Princes—The French fall back from the Rhine and invade Luxembourg—Mutiny of the *landsknechts* at Yvoy—Results of the "Austrian Expedition."

NOTWITHSTANDING the Treaty of Boulogne, the relations between England and France remained for some months in a far from satisfactory state, as several questions, such as the restoration of the merchant vessels captured by either side during the war and the frontier line of the Calais Pale, had been reserved for future settlement and proved by no means easy to adjust. At one time, indeed, there seemed a danger of a fresh rupture, for the Guises, who hated England, did not fail to make the most of these disagreements, and urged Henri II to follow up his recovery of Boulogne by the conquest of Guines and Calais. The Constable, however, partly out of hostility to the Guises and partly from a genuine desire for peace, used all his influence to bring about a better understanding, and finally succeeded, not only in arriving at a satisfactory settlement of the outstanding difficulties, but in concluding a marriage-treaty with

England, by which it was arranged that Edward VI should wed Henri II's eldest daughter, Madame Élisabeth, so soon as that young lady, now in her seventh year, should reach a marriageable age (July 19, 1551). Henri II did not fail to show his appreciation of his old friend's services, and, almost immediately after the signing of the marriage-treaty, letters-patent were issued erecting the Constable's barony of Montmorency into a duchy-peerage, the title to be transmissible to his daughters in the event of the failure of heirs male.

Thus, on the two important questions of foreign policy which had found Montmorency and the Guises in opposition—that of Italy in 1548 and that of England—the counsels of the Constable had prevailed, and, notwithstanding the credit which his rivals had secured by the betrothal of their niece to the heir to the throne, there can be little doubt that he would have continued to exercise the paramount influence in affairs of State, if the Lorraine princes had not enjoyed the support of a powerful ally.

This ally was, of course, Diane de Poitiers, who, it will be remembered, from jealousy of the Constable, had encouraged the ambition of the Guises. That for four years Montmorency had been more than able to hold his own against so redoubtable a combination can only be explained by the supposition that Diane, true to her policy of holding the balance between the rival parties, had been unwilling to allow the Guises to become too powerful, and had therefore employed her influence somewhat sparingly on their behalf. For, with the years, Diane's ascendancy over the King seemed to increase rather than diminish. "The person whom without doubt the King loves and prefers," writes the Venetian Ambassador, Lorenzo Contarini, in 1552, "is Madame de Valentinois. She is a woman of fifty-two. . . . He has loved her much ; he loves her still, and *she is his mistress*,¹ old though she is. . . . She is a woman of

¹ The phrase in the original is too coarse to permit of a literal translation.

intelligence, who has always been the King's *inspiratrice*, and has even assisted him with her purse when he was Dauphin. His Majesty regards himself as under a great obligation to her, and from the beginning of his reign has made her Duchesse de Valentinois, and has given her what I have said, and gives to her still, and does in that and in all else everything that she wishes. She is informed of everything, and each day, as a rule, the King goes after dinner to see her, and remains an hour and a half to discuss matters with her, and he tells her everything that happens."

Notwithstanding the devotion of Henri II to Diane, it must not be supposed that he was altogether proof against the wiles of the many light beauties who frequented his Court, though, as, according to Brantôme, he had a great regard for feminine reputations, and, we may well believe, had no desire to arouse the jealousy of the vindictive sultana, he used to visit those whom he favoured "in the most secret manner possible, in order that they might escape suspicion and scandal. And, if there were one who was discovered, it was not his fault, but rather the lady's."

We have mentioned that among the suite which accompanied the little Queen of Scotland to France was a certain Janet Stuart, Lady Fleming, a natural daughter of James IV. Lady Fleming, who occupied the post of governess to her Majesty, was no longer young—in fact, at the time of her arrival in France, she must have been at least thirty-eight, and she had presented her husband, who had fallen on the field of Pinkie, with five sons and two daughters, the elder of the girls being one of the young Queen's "four Maries." But, like the Duchesse de Valentinois, she appears to have discovered the secret of preserving her charms, for, two months after Mary Stuart's arrival at Saint-Germain, we find Artus de Brézé assuring the Queen-dowager of Scotland that "she had sent a lady hither with the Queen, her daughter, who had pleased all the company

as much as the six most comely women of this kingdom could have done. . . . I mean Madame de Flamy [*sic*].”

It is probable that by “all this company” the discreet diplomatist intended her royal correspondent to understand the King, and, any way, by the summer of the following year his Majesty’s own correspondence with Marie de Lorraine shows him to be taking a most suspicious interest in the lady in question. He cannot speak too highly of the manner in which she discharges her important duties; he states that she has been lamenting to him that one of her sons is still a prisoner in England, and he begs the Queen-dowager to effect an exchange between a certain Englishman and the young man, as he is very anxious to reward Lady Fleming “for the good and agreeable services which she renders about the person of our little daughter, the Queen of Scotland.”

The “good and agreeable services” of Lady Fleming were not confined to her royal mistress, and towards the end of 1550 she found herself in an interesting condition. All might have been well with her had she but observed the discretion which so delicate a situation demanded; but, “instead of keeping a closed mouth,” she was so ill-advised as actually to boast about it. “God be thanked!” said she, in her broken French, “I am with child by the King, and I feel very honoured and very happy about it,” adding that the royal blood must certainly contain some magical properties, since she found herself in such excellent health.¹

These rash words were duly reported to Madame de Valentinois, who was, of course, well aware of what had been going on. Diane might have been disposed to pardon an infidelity in which the senses of her royal lover had probably been far more concerned than his heart; but she felt that it was impossible for her to ignore so public a scandal, so impudent an invasion of her prerogatives. She and the Queen united to get rid

¹ Brantôme.

of this mistress of the moment, and made things so unpleasant for the King that he was glad enough to make his peace with them by the sacrifice of his Scottish innamorata, who was accordingly deprived of her post of governess and banished from the Court, though she did not return to Scotland until some years later.¹

This affair, ignored by many historians, nevertheless, entailed consequences of the first importance. Hitherto, as we have said, Madame de Valentinois would appear to have employed her influence somewhat sparingly on behalf of the Guises, with the result that the Constable still continued to dominate the policy of France. But, rightly or wrongly, Diane believed that, out of jealousy of her ascendancy over the King, Montmorency had encouraged the amorous relations of his Majesty with Lady Fleming, in the hope that the latter might succeed in supplanting her in the royal favour. This conviction exasperated Diane to the last degree; the smouldering antagonism between her and the Constable leaped into flame; and her entire influence was henceforth thrown on to the side of the Guises.

“To the great displeasure of the King,” writes Contarini, “the Constable and Madame [de Valentinois] are now declared enemies. This hostility began three years ago; but it only broke forth openly last year, when the duchess perceived that the Constable had plotted to divert the King from the passion he had for her, by making him fall in love with the governess of the Queen of Scotland, a very pretty little woman. The affair, indeed, went so far that this governess became with child by the King. Madame complained bitterly of this; the King had to offer many apologies for it; and for a long time the Constable and Madame were not even on speaking terms. At length, at his Majesty’s entreaty, they made a semblance of a peace, but at

¹ The fruit of her *liaison* with the King—a boy—was named after his royal father, and is known to history as the Bastard d’Angoulême. We shall have occasion to speak of him hereafter.

bottom their hatred is as bitter as ever. Hence, have arisen the two parties which are like two factions at the Court, and he who draws near to one knows assuredly that he must expect nothing but hostility from the other."

The knowledge that they could now count on the full support of the favourite naturally served to stimulate the arrogance and ambition of the Guises. Because Lizet, the First Président of the Parlement of Paris, refused to acknowledge their princely quality, on the ground that the body of which he was the head recognised no princes in France save the Valois and the Bourbons, they insisted on his dismissal, and replaced him by Le Maistre, a creature of their own, who was later to distinguish himself by his persecution of the Huguenots. They next attacked the Chancellor, and, on the plea that his health was no longer equal to the discharge of his duties, he, too, was removed, though he was allowed to retain the title. Then, flushed with success, they determined to seek a revenge for the Constable's diplomatic successes by drawing France into another war with Charles V.

For some time past it had been increasingly evident that nothing short of a miracle could avert a fresh rupture between the Houses of France and Austria; the only question was how long would the inevitable struggle be delayed. In addition to old subjects of dispute, such as the retention of the States of the Duke of Savoy by France, and of Navarre by the Spaniards, each cherished several other grievances. The French Government complained of encouragement given by the Spaniards to the insurgents of Bordeaux; of the hostile attitude adopted by the Emperor during the war of Boulogne, when he had sent a herald to forbid Henri II to attack Calais; of his attempts to thwart the renewal of the old alliance between France and the Swiss cantons, and of the punishment he had inflicted on the captains

of *landsknechts* who had served in the French army, one of whom he had caused to be executed for high treason. Charles V was irritated against France by her refusal of his demands for the extradition of those captains who had taken refuge there, by the voyages of French vessels to the Indies, and by the incessant intrigues of the French agents in Italy.

Italy was always the apple of discord, and it was here that hostilities began. Early in 1549, Ottavio Farnese, jealous of the favour shown by the French to his younger brother Orazio, the betrothed of Diane de France, had made his peace with the Emperor, a proceeding which so much irritated Paul III that he promptly deprived him of Parma, and declared the duchy annexed to the States of the Church. Ottavio declined to submit to the will of his grandfather, and endeavoured to regain possession of the town by force; and this unseemly family squabble so affected the health of the aged Pontiff that before the year was out he was dead. His successor, Julius III, had no sons or grandsons to aggrandize or quarrel with, and, being of a quiet and pleasure-loving disposition, his only desire was for compromise and peace. As an earnest of his good intentions, he began by restoring Parma to Ottavio, and flattered himself that he had thereby removed the chief cause of dissension. But Ferrante Gonzaga, the Viceroy of the Milanese, between whom and the Farnesi there existed a long-standing and bitter enmity, proceeded to establish a sort of blockade of Parma, on the ground that the suzerainty of the duchy belonged to his master, whereupon Ottavio threw himself on the protection of Henri II. Either through irritation at the conduct of his vassal, or in the hope of extinguishing so dangerous a spark, the Pope declared the fief forfeited, and applied to Charles V for assistance, thereby kindling the very conflagration it was his desire to avert.

The French Government did not fail to take advantage of so excellent a pretext for intervention in Italy, and,

by a treaty signed on May 27, 1551, the King formally took Ottavio Farnese under his protection, and the War of Parma began. The French compelled the Papal-Imperialist forces to raise the siege of Parma, took several towns in Piedmont garrisoned by Spanish troops, and captured a Spanish merchant fleet off Hyères. Nevertheless, Henri II and Charles V still remained nominally at peace; since the former was merely supposed to be acting as the protector of Ottavio Farnese, and the latter as the auxiliary of the Pope. But this pretence could not long be observed, and in the early spring of 1552 open war broke out.

It was, however, the affairs of Germany, not of Italy, which caused the mask to be thrown aside.

The great object of the policy of Charles was to reduce to the rules of a common obedience all the subjects of his immense dominions. At the height of his struggle against François I he had deprived the Spanish provinces of their ancient privileges; and, as soon as peace was concluded, he hastened to take advantage of it to impose his authority on the petty sovereigns of the German Empire. In April 1547, on the field of Mühlberg, he crushed the rebellious princes of the League of Schmalkalde, by which victory he laid Germany, to all appearance, at his feet. But twelve months later he committed the most fatal error of his whole career, by the promulgation of the celebrated Interim of Augsburg, which united both Lutherans and Catholics against him, in the belief that the Emperor intended to profit by their religious dissensions to establish his political domination. The outbreak of the War of Parma, which necessitated the withdrawal of the Spanish garrisons from Germany, gave the malcontents an opportunity of which they were not slow to profit; the League of Schmalkalde was renewed, and rendered infinitely more formidable by the adhesion to it of the warlike Moritz, Elector of Saxony; negotiations were opened with France, and on October 5, 1551, at Friedwald, Moritz



ANNE D'ESTE, DUCHESSE DE GUISE, AFTERWARDS DUCHESSE DE NEMOURS

signed with Jean du Fraisse, Bishop of Bayonne, Henri II's Ambassador to the German Princes, a treaty of alliance, "*pro Germaniæ patriæ libertate recuperanda*," which was confirmed in the following January at Chambord.

By this treaty, both the King of France and the League of Schmalkalde agreed to bring into the field 50,000 infantry and 20,000 cavalry, in order to drive the Emperor from Germany, and the princes, in return for Henri II's assistance, authorised him to take possession of the towns of Toul, Metz, and Verdun—the "Three Bishoprics"—which he was to govern in the quality of "Vicar of the Empire."

The Constable had opposed as long as possible an enterprise of which no one could foresee the ultimate issue. But the Guises, backed as they now were by the whole weight of the favourite's influence, had proved too strong for him. Besides which, Henri II, very obstinate in his hatreds as in his affections, detested Charles V, having never forgiven him the cruel captivity to which he had been subjected in Spain, nor the cunning endeavour to dismember his inheritance for the benefit of his younger brother. The temptation to humble his own and his father's enemy, and, at the same time, to complete the defence of the north-eastern frontier by the annexation of the Three Bishoprics, was one which he found impossible to resist.

The continual wars of François I had left France in an exhausted condition. But the marvellous recuperative power which she has always displayed had enabled her to recover from the drain which the late King's ambitious enterprises had imposed upon her, and she was now once more in a position to grapple with her great adversary both on the Po and on the Rhine. All through the winter of 1551-2, active preparations for the coming struggle were in progress throughout the whole of France, and from early January to the end of March an endless procession of men-at-arms, light horsemen, arquebusiers, pikemen, cannon, baggage-wagons, and

camp-followers might have been seen wending its way towards the Lorraine frontier. The war appears to have been generally popular, for Henri II, unlike his father, whose armies had been largely composed of mercenaries, entertained a high opinion of the warlike qualities of the French, and his decision to trust, in a great measure, to the valour of his own subjects had been hailed with enthusiasm. "There is no need to say with what alacrity and good-will every man made ready for this war. . . . There was not a town in which the drums did not beat to call out the young men, many of whom quitted father and mother in order to enroll themselves. Most of the shops were emptied of their work-people, so great was the ardour among persons of all conditions to take part in this expedition and to see the river Rhine."¹

The army was concentrated between Châlons and Troyes, and at Vitry, in the first week in April, Henri II reviewed it. It was an imposing, if somewhat motley, array, and comprised, according to Boyvin de Villars, 15,000 French infantry,² 9,000 *landsknechts*, 7,000 Swiss, 1,650 men-at-arms,³ about 3,000

¹ *Mémoires de Vieilleville*.

² The French infantry at this period were recruited almost exclusively in the south-western provinces, chiefly in the valleys of the Lot, the Dordogne, and the Garonne. The poor *noblesse* of these districts gladly accepted the appointments of captains and lieutenants of infantry companies; many gentleman, indeed, unable to find places in the cavalry, armed themselves at their own expense, and joined as *lanspessades*, or foot-lancers.

³ The companies of men-at-arms (*compagnies d'ordonnance*) formed the nucleus of the army. Each of these companies comprised from twenty-five to one hundred men-at-arms, followed each by two archers and a *couteillier*. All the men-at-arms were gentlemen; indeed, the mere fact of admission to one of these companies conferred nobility. They received 34 livres a month, a sum equivalent to about 350 francs to-day, and had their valets and pages, who swelled the effectives of the companies, but seldom took part in the fighting. The men-at-arms were mounted on powerful Turkish or Spanish stallions, heavily barded, their bards being painted with the colours of the cloaks which the captains wore, so that in battle each company might be able to rally to its own colours, were clad in complete armour, and armed with long lances, long swords, and sometimes with maces. Except when opposed to the very best infantry, the charge of a body of men-at-arms was irresistible. We have seen with what ease the first Duc de Guise routed the Imperial *landsknechts*

light horse,¹ 1,000 mounted arquebusiers, 2,000 men of the *arrière-ban*, or reserve, six Scottish and one English company, 200 gentlemen of the King's Household, 400 archers of the Guard, and some 500 gentlemen volunteers. The artillery consisted of sixty cannon of various calibre.

In the raising and equipment of this army, the new Duc de Guise had taken a very active part, and had proved himself as admirable an organiser as he was ere long to prove himself a general. "This great captain," writes the Duc d'Aumale, "had comprehended all the advantages that might be derived from firearms,"² and it was on his advice that the companies of *arquebusiers à cheval*³ had been formed, while he had also urged the employment, as infantry, of the French peasants from the south-western provinces, who had proved their value as fighting-men in the defence of Piedmont in the last war against Charles V. In recognition of the services which he had rendered in the organisation of the army and of the authority which he was to exercise during the approaching campaign, the duke received the titles of Prince de Joinville and Hereditary Sénéchal of Champagne, titles destined to form the appanage of his eldest son, who thus became a kind of dauphin of the House of Guise. But these honours were

under the walls of Neufchâteau, and in March 1565 in the plain of Saint-Denis the Prince de Condé, with only three companies, scattered to the winds the Parisian militia, nearly 20,000 strong. The command of a company of men-at-arms, which was only conferred upon very great nobles or experienced captains, was the gage of power and favour, and was more valued than a marshal's *bâton* or the government of a province.

¹ The light cavalry, used chiefly for scouting and foraging purposes, were mounted on small and active horses, wore only corselets, arm-pieces, and *bourguignettes* (light casques) and carried half-lances, short curved swords, and pistols. The pistol, it may be observed, was a weapon which had only been recently introduced.

² *Histoire des Princes de Condé.*

³ This innovation, however, appears to have been far from popular. People saw with regret the old military usages modified and personal courage became less necessary, when, writes Blaise de Montloc, "so many brave and valiant men met their deaths often at the hands of the greatest poltroons and cowards, who would not have dared to look in the face those whom they brought to earth, from afar, with their miserable bullets."

by no means barren ones, since revenues equivalent to nearly 400,000 francs in money of to-day were attached to them.

The plan of campaign was as follows : The Constable, with the advance-guard of the army, was to possess himself, without bloodshed if it could possibly be avoided, of the towns of Toul and Metz ; while the King and Guise, with the main body, would enter Lorraine, under the pretext of putting the affairs of that duchy in order, and deprive the Duchess Christina, niece of the Emperor, of the regency, which she exercised nominally on behalf of her son, Charles III, who was only ten years old, but really in the interests of her Imperial uncle. This effected, they were to join the Constable at Metz, and the whole army would enter Germany by way of Alsace, perhaps to co-operate with the rebel princes, and, in any case, to endeavour to extend the frontier of France as far as the Rhine. The intrigues of the Guises, who possessed several bishoprics in this part of France, had paved the way for the success of the first two parts of this plan.

Leaving the King at Joinville, Montmorency, accompanied by the Bourbon Princes, crossed the Meuse and marched on Toul, whose magistrates, at the instigation of the bishop, Toussaint d'Hocédy, a former *protégé* of Cardinal Jean de Lorraine, admitted him without even a pretence of resistance. Pont-à-Mousson likewise surrendered at the first summons, and, having taken by assault the Abbey of Goze, the advance-post of Metz, which the Imperialists had fortified, the Constable arrived before the walls of the town.

In Metz itself there was no Imperial garrison, and, thanks to the efforts of its bishop, the Cardinal de Lenoncourt, who was wholly devoted to France, a great part of its population had already been won over. Nevertheless, the Constable only succeeded in getting possession of it by stratagem. The municipal authorities having consented to allow him and the princes to enter

the town, on condition that they brought with them only two companies, he formed them entirely of picked men, part of whom, under the leadership of Tavannes, seized the gate by which their comrades had been admitted and held it until several hundred men had entered the place. Thereupon the Messins abandoned all idea of resistance, and the keys were surrendered. And so Metz passed into the possession of France (April 10, 1552), to remain there for more than three centuries.

On the day following the surrender of Metz, Henri II, accompanied by Guise, La Marck, and Saint-André, quitted Joinville, and, after taking formal possession of Toul, advanced with the main body of the army to Nancy. Nothing would have been easier than to annex Lorraine to France, a union which was not only demanded by the interests of his kingdom, but would have been in accord with the interests and sentiments of the people of Lorraine. But Guise did not wish to see his House deprived of a sovereign crown. If Lorraine became a French province, the Guises would cease to be foreign princes, and become merely French nobles, and their prestige would be seriously diminished. He therefore advised the King to leave the young Duke of Lorraine in possession of his dominions, and to content himself with taking measures to bind him to the interests of France and assure the predominance of French influence in the duchy. To this Henri II consented, and, on his arrival at Nancy, issued a proclamation, announcing that he came as "the protector and preserver of the person and property" of the Duke Charles. And, the better to protect and preserve the little prince, he separated him from his disconsolate mother and sent him to the French Court, to be brought up with the Dauphin and eventually to marry Madame Claude, gave the regency to his uncle, the Comte de Vaudémont, who was wholly devoted to France, and placed garrisons in all the fortresses. Thus it was that Lorraine was

left in the possession of a family destined to combat the policy of France during more than two centuries, to thwart the designs of Richelieu, Mazarin, and even of Louis XIV, and skilfully to prolong a kind of civil war between the Lorrainers and the French.

Having settled the affairs of Lorraine, Henri II turned northwards, and on Easter Sunday (April 17) joined the Constable at Metz. On entering the town, the King swore to respect the municipal privileges; nevertheless, instead of leaving the authority in the hands of the sheriffs, he entrusted it to a strong garrison, commanded by the Sieur de Gonnor, a *protégé* of Montmorency's. This high-handed action, which was to prove a serious blunder, was contrary to the advice of Guise, who had represented that, by showing respect for the customs and privileges of Metz, they would reassure the inhabitants of Strasburg and other German towns, and thus facilitate their occupation of them. But he was overruled by Montmorency, who boasted that "he would enter Strasburg and the other Rhine cities as easily as he would plunge a piece of wood into butter."

A few days later the French broke up their camp before Metz and directed their march towards the Vosges and the Rhine. They crossed the mountains, not without considerable difficulty, for the winter's snow still lay there, and descended into Alsace. In Lorraine, the inhabitants had shown themselves well-disposed towards the invaders, but in Alsace, which was thoroughly German in speech and feeling, and where the French began by behaving as though they were in a conquered country, the people were distinctly hostile. "Not a soul came to us with provisions, and we were obliged to go a distance of five or six leagues for forage and food, and to take a strong escort, since, if even ten men went together, they never came back."¹

To the chagrin of the Constable, who had, rather naïvely, imagined that he would be able to repeat at

¹ *Mémoires de Vieilleville.*

Strasburg the stratagem which had succeeded so well at Metz, the citizens, taking warning by the fate of the latter town, refused to receive the King if he came accompanied by more than forty gentlemen, and would not suffer the troops to approach within cannon-shot of the walls. And so the invaders had to derive what consolation they might from the occupation of such places as Haguenau and Weissembourg, at which latter town Henri II received a communication from his German allies reminding him that he had been invited to protect and not to conquer—a fact which his Majesty seemed in danger of forgetting. The national sentiment, indeed, had been profoundly moved by Henri II's treatment of Metz and by the insolence of the French troops; and it was plain that, if the King neglected the warning he had received, he would rally all Germany to the Emperor.

Any doubts which the King might have been inclined to entertain as to the imprudence of venturing further from his base was removed by the news that Mary of Hungary, Governess of the Netherlands, had thrown a considerable force into Luxembourg, which might threaten his line of retreat. Accordingly, "having watered their horses in the Rhine," the French turned their backs on the great river and began their homeward march.¹ They did not, however, return by the most direct route, for, after snapping up Verdun—the last of the Three Bishoprics—they invaded Luxembourg.

Guise had the idea, then almost novel, of paying promptly for the few provisions which the peasants brought them, in consequence of which they soon had an abundance. But, if provisions did not fail, they suffered a good deal from exposure, as they carried no tents, and, "in default of finding villages every one

¹ On this, it may be mentioned, the army had the aid of a *carte de la cosmographie du traict du Rhin*, which was probably the first map used in war. Henri II, on its being shown to him, was greatly astonished and delighted, and declared that "the chief of an army ought never to set out without a map, any more than a good pilot without his calamite."

was lodged under the stars and encamped in the hay." The weary soldiers consoled themselves by the hope of pillaging some place; but, to their intense disgust, though they took in succession Damvilliers and Montmédy, Henri II refused to allow these towns to be sacked, because he desired to unite them to his realm, and had no interest in maltreating or impoverishing the inhabitants. The fury of the *landsknechts*, who saw themselves deprived of what they considered their lawful prey, communicated itself to the French infantry, "who were in a state of suppressed mutiny, and from that moment began to disperse and secretly to desert their standards."¹ The irritation reached its height when, at the capitulation of Yvoy, when orders were issued that the infantry were to remain outside the ramparts, and the Constable sent his own company of men-at-arms and that of his eldest son into the town to protect the citizens. The *landsknechts* broke out into open mutiny, effected an entrance through a breach in the walls, and began to plunder the houses and maltreat the unfortunate people, who had believed that the promise of the King of France was sufficient to ensure their safety. The Constable's son ordered his company to charge the German robbers with levelled lances; but in the narrow and slippery streets of the town, the heavily-armed men and horses, so irresistible in the open, were unable to manœuvre, more than a dozen of them were shot down, and François de Montmorency was nearly killed by a ball from an arquebus which ricocheted on to his saddle-bow. Finally, the men-at-arms were obliged to retreat, and victory remained with the mutineers, who made the wretched inhabitants submit to all the horrors which were inflicted upon towns taken by assault.

Next day, the King, in great wrath, sent the provost-marshal and his archers to arrest the ringleaders of the mutiny; but the *landsknechts* rushed to the rescue of

¹ Rabutin, *Guerres belgiques*.

their comrades, killed several of the archers, and obliged the provost-marshal to fly for his life. Indeed, so dangerous a spirit of revolt existed in the army that it was considered expedient to compensate the French infantry, who had taken no part in the pillage of Yvoy, by allowing them to sack Chimay, which had been taken by assault. In the course of the sack, more than one hundred of them were burned to death, while engaged in plundering the vaults of the citadel, which their comrades had thoughtlessly set on fire.

After garrisoning the captured towns and reinstating Madame de Valentinois's son-in-law, the Maréchal de la Marck, in his duchy of Bouillon, of which he had been deprived by the Emperor, the army re-entered France and was finally disbanded at Étreaupont, on July 26.

Thus ended the "Austrasian expedition," as this military promenade was called. Its results, if less splendid than Henri II had anticipated, were nevertheless, of the highest importance. In the first place, it had created a diversion in favour of the rebel princes, who would otherwise have had to face an attack upon their rear by the Imperial Army of the Netherlands. In the second, the effective protectorate of France had been established over Lorraine, the custody of its little ruler's person secured, and the Austrian influence of Christina of Denmark replaced by the French influence of the Comte de Vaudémont. In the third, the north-eastern frontier had been strengthened by the acquisition of several fortresses and the recovery of La Marck's duchy of Bouillon. Finally, France had Metz.

During Guise's absence on this campaign, the Cardinal de Lorraine watched over his interests at the Court, and kept him informed of everything that happened there. At the beginning of August, the King, who had quitted the army some time before it was disbanded, summoned the duke to join him at Fontaine-

bleau, whereupon his Eminence wrote immediately to his brother : " It will be very necessary that I should have an opportunity of speaking to you before you see the King. I will await you in order to render you an account of everything."

For information of another kind, Guise had recourse to the complaisance of his former rival, Antoine de Bourbon, whom he had temporarily converted into a friend and a confidant. "*Monsieur, mon compagnon,*" writes the prince, " I have spoken to her whom you have requested me to speak to. I am told that I am to assure you earnestly that they have done her an injustice, and that, since she saw you, no man has been anything to her—Anthoine."¹

Who this lady was we do not know, but it is pretty safe to presume that it was not the Duchesse de Guise.

¹ Guise, *Mémoires-journaux*, Letter of May 19, 1553.

CHAPTER XI

Indignation aroused in Germany by France's annexation of Metz—Charles V organises a great army for the recovery of the town—The Duc de Guise is entrusted with the defence of Metz—His preparations—He sets the garrison a splendid example of energy and devotion to duty—Albert Alcibiades, Margrave of Brandenburg—He defeats and makes prisoner the Duc d'Aumale—The siege of Metz begins—Arrival of the Emperor—Terrific bombardment of the town—A surprise for the Imperialists—Guise's speech to the garrison—Indignation of Charles V at the refusal of his generals to attempt to take the town by storm—Arrival of Ambroise Paré—A successful sortie—Scene between the Margrave of Brandenburg and his prisoner the Duc d'Aumale—The Imperialists are compelled to raise the siege—Horrible condition of their abandoned camp—Humanity of Guises towards the wounded—Negligence of the French Government—Thérouenne and Hesdin taken by the Imperialists—The French invade the Netherlands—Guise subjected to a subordinate position by the jealousy of Montmorency—His victory at Renti rendered futile owing to the incapacity or ill-will of the Constable—Violent quarrel between Guise and Gaspard de Coligny—Peace of Vaucelles and abdication of Charles V.

FRANCE had Metz, but it seemed very doubtful if she would long be able to retain it. On August 2, 1552, the Emperor, at the earnest entreaty of his brother Ferdinand, accepted the agreement of Passau, whereby he annulled the hated Interim of Augsburg, promised to convene a Diet for the regulation of religious affairs, and set at liberty the rebel princes whom he had made captive at Mühlberg. Germany, lately so divided, became once more united. The progress of the French had aroused almost universal alarm and indignation, and, now that their religious and political liberties appeared to be no longer in jeopardy, princes and people had only one thought: the recovery of Metz, the Imperial town, upon which the French King, taking advantage of their internal differences, had laid his sacrilegious hands. Like the Mohammedans, upon the

proclamation of a holy war, the Germans flew to arms, as though seized by a sort of frenzy. Charles V summoned his legions from all parts of his vast dominions : from the Pyrenees to the frontier of Poland, from the marshes of Holland to the plains of Lombardy. " At the service of the *furor Germanicus* he placed all Europe."

The pretext for the mobilisation of this great army, which, towards the end of August, began moving from the valley of the Upper Danube, where it had assembled, in the direction of the Rhine, was the necessity of suppressing the activities of that bloodstained miscreant Albert Alcibiades, Margrave of Brandenburg, who had refused to recognise the agreement of Passau, and, at the head of a horde of brigands—Brandenburgers, Pomeranians, and Prussians—was roaming the Rhineland, forcing cities to pay him tribute, pillaging churches, and spreading terror and devastation wherever he went. But the French Government, aware that it was impossible for Charles to accept as an accomplished fact their possession of Metz without seriously compromising his authority in Germany, did not doubt that it was against their recent annexation rather than the robber Hohenzollern that his preparations were directed, and were already actively engaged in making ready for its defence. As Montmorency's position at the head of affairs necessitated his presence in the centre of the kingdom, this task was entrusted to Guise, who was nominated Governor of Metz, with practically unlimited powers. Montmorency's very able biographer, M. François Decrue, asserts that, bitter as was the rivalry between the two great nobles, it was not permitted to prejudice the safety of the town, and that the Constable rendered the duke every possible assistance. M. Forneron, on the other hand, declares that Montmorency's jealousy of Guise prevented him from doing more than he was obliged ; and it is certain that Guise found it necessary to have recourse to the good offices of Diane de Poitiers to secure what he needed, since the Maréchal

de Saint-André writes to him, under date August 27, 1552 : " I have not failed to show your letter to Madame de Valentinois, who usually does all that she is able to have you furnished with what you require." A strange condition of affairs indeed, when the security of an important town, on the point of being besieged by a great army, depended on the favour which the commander of its garrison happened to enjoy with the King's mistress ! ¹

Even with the most loyal co-operation on the part of the Government, Guise's task was a sufficiently formidable one. The town of Metz is enclosed on the west, north, and east by the Moselle and the Seille, which form a very strong natural bulwark, but on the south, on which side the place is directly accessible, it was, at this time, only defended by an old wall without bastions and in a very bad state of repair, while the extensive faubourgs afforded abundant cover for the batteries of a besieging force. To render the town defensible against the great army which was approaching, extensive works must be undertaken ; but, even if they were pushed on with all possible expedition, it was very doubtful whether they could be completed before the arrival of the enemy.

Guise, however, was not the man to be discouraged easily. Early in August, he quitted Fontainebleau and proceeded to Toul. " The plague was raging there, but, notwithstanding the danger, he entered the town," ² and, aware of the importance of this place in affording shelter to troops who could sally forth to harass an army besieging Metz and cut off their supplies, he gave order for its fortifications to be restored, at his own expense.

On August 18, he arrived at Metz and set to work with furious energy on his herculean task, in which he

¹ Guise appears to have owed his command in part at least to the influence of Diane, for we find him writing to thank her for helping him to obtain " the everlasting honour of pulling the Emperor's beard."

² Bertrand de Salignac, *Siège de Metz*.

had the good fortune to have the assistance of the Florentine Piero Strozzi, Camillo Marini, and the Sieur de Saint-Rémy, three of the most skilful engineers of the time. The last of the three, a native of Provence, was a specialist in fortifications, and bore almost as high a reputation as Vauban enjoyed in the following century.

The town suffered cruelly from the necessities of its defence. An immense number of buildings were demolished, to make room for new ramparts, or to clear the approaches; the beautiful faubourgs were almost entirely razed to the ground, with all the churches, convents, and colleges they contained, and even the ancient Abbey of Saint-Arnoul, in which were the tombs of Louis le Débonnaire, of his brother Drogo, of his mother Hildegarde, Charlemagne's best-loved wife, and other great personages of the Carlovingian epoch, was not spared. It was, indeed, impossible to do so, since it was situated on an eminence which commanded the Champenoise quarter, and would most certainly have been turned to account by the besiegers. The bodies were removed, with great solemnity, to the Dominican Church, escorted by Guise and his principal officers, bareheaded and with tapers in their hands.

Notwithstanding the loss and suffering inflicted on them by this wholesale destruction, the citizens proved wonderfully tractable, for, since the occupation of the town in the previous spring, the French had treated them with consideration, and their sympathies were now entirely with their new masters; while Guise's courtesy and tact had gained all hearts. So far from showing any resentment, many of the people are said to have assisted in the demolition of their own houses, "regarding it as being for the public good and for their own security."¹

Guise himself set a splendid example of energy and devotion to duty. Although, in time of peace, it was

¹ *Mémoires de Vieilleville.*



FRANCIS I, DUC DE GUISE.

From a contemporary engraving.

his habit to take considerably more than the usual amount of sleep, he now contented himself with brief snatches of repose. At all hours he might be seen hurrying to and fro, encouraging the engineers, who laboured unceasingly, day and night, at the fortifications, supervising the training of the recruits, and inspecting the ammunition and stores which were being brought into the town, of which he caused a careful inventory to be made. He organised the barber-surgeons of Metz into a sort of ambulance-corps, established two military hospitals, made large purchases of salt, which he paid for out of his own pocket, and carefully reconnoitred the environs of the town, in order that his artillery might have the range of the places where he judged that the enemy was most likely to establish his batteries. From the moment of his arrival in Metz until the end of the siege, "many as were the eyes which were continually upon him, he was not seen to waste a single hour." With such ardour, indeed, did he supervise the defence-works that "often he had his dinner brought to him on the ramparts, from fear of losing time in going to and returning from his lodging; and sometimes when the engineers showed signs of fatigue, or the soldiers were inclined to grumble at being put to labour to which they were little accustomed, he himself undertook the work with the princes, nobles, and gentlemen who were in his company, wielding the pick for hours at a time, and showing that it was the duty of a commander to endure toil and sweat in his own person."¹

Among the officers who served under him were four of the Bourbons: the Princes de la Roche-sur-Yon, d'Enghien, de Condé, and the Vidame de Chartres. With them were the two elder sons of the Constable, François and Henri de Montmorency, the Duc de Nemours, the Sieur de la Rochefoucauld, and a great number of other young nobles, "who had come to take their pleasure at the siege." Indeed, if the King

¹ Salignac.

had not refused them permission, almost his entire Court would have scampered off to Metz, so great was their eagerness to serve under Guise and assist him in "pulling the Emperor's beard." These spontaneous reinforcements were very welcome, for not only did they increase the strength of the garrison, but furnished brave and experienced officers to direct the sorties.

Meanwhile, the great army of the Emperor, swollen continually by reinforcements from different quarters of Germany and the Netherlands, was slowly drawing nearer. It had been greatly delayed after crossing the Rhine by the illness of Charles, who was so feeble that he could not walk without support, though his indomitable spirit still drove him on; and it was not until October 19 that it appeared before Metz, while the siege did not really open until the 31st. By that time the fortifications had practically been completed, and the place abundantly provisioned for several months, for Guise had sent away and distributed among the neighbouring towns all the non-combatants, with the exception of a few priests and monks, and some two thousand labourers and citizens, whom he kept to repair the ramparts and assist in serving the artillery.

On the other hand, the Imperialists had received an unlooked-for accession of strength. Albert Alcibiades, endangered by the advance of his outraged suzerain, had offered his services to France; but the price he demanded was so exorbitant, and the French distrusted him so thoroughly, that they were declined. Thereupon the Margrave opened negotiations with the Imperialists, and began to prowl round Toul "like a wolf round the sheepfold." The Constable, informed of this, despatched the Duc d'Aumale with a force of light cavalry to watch him. Aumale sent a herald to the Margrave to complain of the atrocities committed by his barbarians, and to justify the reprisals of the exasperated peasants, who had fallen upon and killed a number of stragglers, for which no one will be inclined greatly to blame them.

But Albert, who, like his illustrious descendant, the Emperor William II of Germany, "despised the laws of war and the usages observed by civilised nations,"¹ promptly made the herald a prisoner; and, when the latter protested against this outrage to the white flag, "loaded the French with abuse, expressed his desire that a thousand calamities might befall them, and protested, with great oaths, that ere long he would bathe in their blood." Shortly afterwards, when Aumale, who could not bring himself to believe that even this ruffian would descend so low as to refuse to respect a flag of truce, was off his guard, the Margrave suddenly threw himself upon the Lorraine prince with his entire force.

The French, surprised and hopelessly outnumbered, were, of course, unable to offer any effective resistance; and Aumale accordingly ordered the retreat to be sounded. But he himself, in despair at the disaster which his carelessness had brought about, refused to take part in it, and, turning his horse, charged single-handed into the thick of the enemy. But the fate he courted did not befall him, for, though he was wounded and unhorsed, the Margrave, aware that the brother of the Duc de Guise and the son-in-law of Diane de Poitiers would be far more valuable to him alive than dead, gave orders that his life should be spared.

Proud of this facile victory, Albert marched to Metz, presented himself with his prisoner in the Imperial camp, made his peace with the Emperor, and joined the besiegers. All unwittingly, however, he had already served the French far more effectively than he could hope to serve Charles; for the blind barbarity with which he had devastated all the surrounding country had changed it into a desert, where the investing army could find neither provisions nor shelter.

¹ And, like the same august personage, we are told that "in the midst of his brigandage, he affected the language of an exalted piety and regarded himself as an instrument of Providence."

At the end of September, Montmorency had assembled a considerable army at Rheims, and early in October he advanced into Lorraine, with the intention of throwing reinforcements into Metz and harassing the Imperialists. But, on reaching Saint-Mihiel, he learned that a Flemish army, under the Comte de Rœux, had invaded Picardy, and, after laying waste the country between the Oise and the Somme, was about to lay siege to Hesdin. He therefore confined himself to strengthening the garrisons of Toul and Verdun, and returned to Rheims, where he was joined by the King; and it was decided that the bulk of the army should be despatched to Picardy, under the command of Vendôme. This decision has been unfavourably criticised by some historians; but it should be pointed out that Guise had assured the King and the Constable that he had a sufficient force for the defence of Metz, and that the royal army could be employed in other operations; while it was certainly necessary to deal with the invasion of Picardy.¹

By the middle of November, three armies were encamped around Metz. The Spaniards, Italians, and Germans besieged it from the south, the Netherlanders from the north, and the troops of Albert Alcibiades from the south-west. The main attack, however, was directed from the south. Authorities differ widely as to the total strength of the investing force, but the most reliable estimate is at from 70,000 to 80,000 men, with about 140 cannon of various calibre.

Great as was the numerical strength of the Imperial army, its effectiveness was ruined by the dissensions between the various nations which composed it. The Germans and the Netherlanders detested the Spaniards, who cordially reciprocated their sentiments; there was little love lost between the Germans and Italians, and the troops who came from the districts which had suffered at the hands of Albert Alcibiades were indignant at the pardon which the exigencies of war had compelled

¹ F. Decrue, *Anne, duc de Montmorency*.

Charles V to extend to the crimes of that princely brigand, and would infinitely have preferred to cut the throats of his Pomeranians and Prussians to those of the French. The Emperor's selection of Alva for the command was most unpopular, and the German and Flemish generals criticised every order he gave, and often ignored him altogether.

Under the cannon of the besiegers, Guise continued the work of fortifying the place. By frequent sorties he maintained the ardour and health of the garrison and harassed the enemy by continual alarms and losses. "Every day he contrived to inflict loss upon the enemy, capturing soldiers and horses and destroying the provisions that were being brought to him." The duke established his quarters near the Porte Champenoise, against which the principal attack was being directed, "in order to be at all hours on the spot where the greatest danger threatened." He had under his orders in the town above 5,000 men; but he was very weak in heavy artillery, since, though he had several formidable-looking pieces, they were for the most part in so much need of repair that, from fear of their bursting, the gunners were obliged to load them with half-charges, and "employ them more for the purpose of producing alarm than effect and to assist the falconets and other little pieces."¹

Nevertheless, Guise did not hesitate to assure the King that he was confident of being able to hold out for ten months. Every two or three days he addressed despatches to the Court or to Montmorency's army to report the progress of the siege, or to suggest means of cutting off the enemy's convoys; for, closely as the place was invested, his messengers do not appear to have experienced much difficulty in making their way through the lines of the besiegers. He also wrote frequently to the Cardinal de Lorraine, who watched over the family's interests at the Court, and his Eminence made it his

¹ Guise, *Mémoires-journaux*.

business to secure from the King a suitable recompense for those gentlemen whom his brother had recommended for their gallantry in the sorties, or to obtain for the partisans of the House of Guise the offices and emoluments of those who had just been killed. Even in the midst of their zeal for the safety of Metz, the two brothers never lost sight for a moment of the necessity of preserving their adherents and of assuring themselves of the support of a numerous body of nobles and gentlemen, bound to them by the ties of gratitude and interest.

On November 13, the batteries of the Imperialists succeeded in effecting a breach near the Porte Champe-noise. In order to obtain the earth to stop it, the defenders had to descend into the moat under a heavy fire. The officers took their share in this dangerous work, and the Sieur de la Palice, a son of the marshal of that name who had fallen on the field of Pavia, was killed.

On the 20th, the Emperor arrived in the camp of the besiegers, "very pale and wasted, with sunken eyes, and hair and beard quite white."¹ He was still, indeed, so weak from illness that he had been carried from Thornville on a litter; but, on reaching Metz, he mounted a white horse and rode through the lines, commending the officers and men who had distinguished themselves. The Imperialists welcomed his arrival with salvoes of artillery and volleys from their arquebuses, and the defenders, under the impression that this was the prelude to a general assault, rushed to arms and hurried to the ramparts.

Charles's arrival had been unexpected, and, while waiting until the Château de la Horgne, behind the ruined Abbey of Saint-Arnoul, could be prepared for himself and his suite, he took up his quarters in a little wooden house which had been hastily constructed adjoining those of Alva. The latter expressed his regret at being unable to offer his Imperial master more suitable

¹ *Bref discours du siège de Metz.*

accommodation ; but Charles smilingly replied that his humble lodging would become “ a beautiful palace when they brought him the keys of the town.”

The Emperor had, in fact, arrived, believing that in a very few days Metz would fall into his hands ; but, to his chagrin, his engineers had just decided that it was necessary to change the point of attack, and had begun to open new trenches opposite the Tour d’Enfer. Against this part of the defences a terrific fire was directed, the trenches being pushed so close to the walls that the garrison were able to throw stones into them. In a single day as many as 14,000 cannon-shot are said to have been discharged, and contemporary writers gravely assure us that so great was the noise of the bombardment that it could be heard beyond the Rhine. The damage effected was certainly not in proportion to what was, for those times, a positively colossal expenditure of ammunition. However, by the 26th, three breaches had been made in the walls, which it was impossible to repair, since the ditches were no longer tenable, and the garrison could no longer descend into them to obtain the earth they required. Finally, on the 28th, the Tour d’Enfer collapsed with a tremendous crash, leaving a gap in the defences 300 paces wide.¹

The Imperialists raised loud shouts of triumph, but, when the dust had cleared away, they perceived that behind the fallen wall was an inner line of earthworks eight feet high, bristling with small cannon, whereupon “ they experienced as much vexation as they had received pleasure.”¹ “ Our men cried out to those outside : ‘ *Au renard ! Au renard !* ’ and they hurled a thousand insults against one another. But M. de Guise forbade any man, on pain of death, to speak with those outside, fearing lest there might be some traitor amongst them who would betray what was being done within the town. After this our men tied live cats to the end of their pikes and put them over the wall, and cried with

¹ Guise, *Mémoires-journaux*.

the cats : ‘ *Miaut ! Miaut !* ’ Of a truth, the Imperialists were much enraged, having been so long in making a breach, . . . only to find behind it a rampart stronger than the wall. They vented their fury upon the poor cats, and shot them with arquebuses, as men might shoot at the popinjay.”¹

The utmost confidence animated the garrison, for Guise passed along the ramparts, laughing and jesting with the officers, encouraging the men who were working to strengthen still further the defences, complimenting those who had recently distinguished themselves, and giving his orders with as much *sang-froid* as though he had been upon parade, and his gaiety communicated itself to every man under his command. At the spot where he had stationed the picked troops of the garrison, he paused and delivered a short address. “ I rejoice,” said he, “ pointing to the breach, “ I rejoice to see that the enemy has at last overturned the barrier which was hindering your valour, and which was more serviceable to him than to you. It is only fair that, after you have so often been to seek him, even in his camp, that he shall come once to reconnoitre this town which he boasted he would be able to take so easily. Here you have an opportunity of acquiring great glory, which will not often be offered you. Profit by it, and show to all Europe, whose eyes are upon you, that it is not impossible for a little band of Frenchmen to check an Emperor who was besieging them with three armies, and who boasts of not having been stopped even by the pillars of Hercules.”²

This speech roused the garrison to the highest pitch of enthusiasm, and with one voice they assured their leader that, if the Emperor ever entered the town, it should only be over their dead bodies. Preparations had, indeed, already been made for a most desperate

¹ Ambroise Paré, *Voyage de Metz*.

² An allusion to the emblem adopted by Charles V, namely, two pillars with the word *Ultra*, signifying that he had passed beyond Cadiz, in carrying his conquering arms into Africa.

resistance; and, if the Imperialists had succeeded in carrying the earthworks, they would have been obliged to storm a great number of houses, every one of which had been converted into a fortress and loop-holed for arquebusiers, in the face of a murderous fire and a deluge of huge stones, iron bolts, bundles of lighted fagots, quick-lime and molten lead, which would have been poured upon them from the roofs and windows.

The expected assault, however, was never delivered, for the besiegers had not counted on the second line of defence; and, though the Emperor repeatedly urged that an attempt should be made to storm the place, Alva and the other generals, who had been informed by some Imperialist prisoners, whom Guise had set at liberty for that purpose, of the preparations which had been made for their reception and of the determination of the garrison to die every man in his harness, firmly refused to undertake it, pointing out that it would be to lead the troops to certain destruction. They were probably right, but Charles reproached them bitterly with their want of courage, and declared that he "saw very well that he had no real men left, and must take leave of the world and get him to a monastery."

The bombardment was accordingly resumed, and the Tour de Wessieux, near the Porte Champenoise, was destroyed, leaving a new breach a hundred paces wide; but this gap in the defences was covered, like the first, by a rampart of earth, and the Imperialists did not venture to attack. As a considerable number of the garrison had been wounded in the sorties, which were made sometimes two or three times a day, Guise sent for Ambroise Paré, the surgeon who had extracted the lance-head from his cheek, when he had been wounded before Boulogne, five years before. An Italian officer of the Imperial army consented, in consideration of a bribe of 1,500 écus, to introduce him into Metz by night, "with his apothecary and drugs."¹ Under Paré's care,

¹ Ambroise Paré, *Voyage de Metz*.

many of the wounded who would otherwise most certainly have died recovered.

November had been cold and wet; December was worse. The camp of the Imperialists became a swamp; their huts and tents were inundated, and the condition of the roads, which rain and snow had rendered almost impassable for heavy vehicles, combined with the activity of the garrisons of Toul and Verdun, rendered it difficult for their convoys to reach them. The troops suffered terribly, particularly the Spaniards and Italians, unaccustomed to the rigours of the northern winter; dysentery and typhus broke out, and hundreds were carried off, while numbers deserted. The besieged, too, gave them no rest, and their continual sorties contributed to the general demoralisation which prevailed.

"Our men often ran out upon them, by order of M. de Guise," writes Ambroise Paré, "chiefly the young nobility, led by experienced captains; and, indeed, it was doing them a great favour to allow them to sally from the town and run upon the enemy. . . . Then an alarm would be sounded all through the enemy's camp, . . . their drums would beat, their trumpets and clarions would sound, and all their soldiers would cry: 'Arm, arm, arm! To arms, to arms, to arms!' like the hue and cry after wolves, and all in divers tongues, according to their nationality. And you would see them come out of their tents and huts as thick as ants when you uncover the ant-hills."¹

On one occasion, a body of 140 men-at-arms and a company of mounted arquebusiers penetrated into the midst of the camp of the Margrave of Brandenburg, captured a convoy which was on its way thither, and conducted it in triumph into Metz. In the course of this sortie, some 200 of the Margrave's brigands were killed, and he himself wounded by a lance-thrust from the Baron de Torcy. Almost simultaneously, another party from the town, under the command of Vieilleville,

¹ Ambroise Paré, *Voyage de Metz*.

fell upon a body of Albert's troops stationed at the village of Rougereuilles, and made great havoc among them.

Smarting with the pain of his wound, and furious at the loss of so many men, Albert ordered his unfortunate prisoner, the Duc d'Aumale, to be brought before him, and "holding his dagger to the duke's throat, told him, with blasphemies and insults, that he was the cause—that it was in the hope of rescuing him that his people had on several occasions been slain; but that he would deny God, if, in the event of them [the French] returning again, he did not cut him to pieces without mercy and blow out his brains with a pistol."¹ Shortly afterwards, however, Aumale became seriously ill, at which we can hardly be surprised, when we are told that his captor had "treated him worse than if he had been a Turk or a Moor and made him wear his shirt for thirty-six days!" Upon which Albert, fearing that he might die and cheat him of the large ransom he counted on obtaining for his liberation, consented to send him to Forbach, under promise of a ransom of 70,000 crowns.

By Christmas, on which festival only a few shots were exchanged, Charles V was reluctantly compelled to admit the hopelessness of continuing the siege. "I see well," said he, "that Fortune is a jade; she prefers a young King to an old Emperor." Next morning, the retreat of the Imperialists began, though it was not until New Year's Day that Charles left his quarters to return to Thionville and thence to Brussels. Albert Alcibiades remained to the last, to cover the retreat of the artillery; but a sortie of the French compelled him to abandon a number of pieces, whose carriages had stuck fast in the ruts of the muddy roads.

The abandoned camp of the besiegers presented a spectacle calculated to excite the compassion of even the most hardened veteran. The number of newly-dug graves which were to be seen on every side made it

¹ *Mémoires de Vieilleville.*

resemble one vast cemetery; the unburied bodies of men and horses lay about in all directions, and there was also a multitude of sick and wounded men, "some prone on the ground, others seated on stones, with their legs in the mud, frozen up to the knees. More than 300 were rescued from this horrible misery, but it was found necessary to amputate the limbs of the majority."¹

The generous-hearted Guise treated the unfortunate derelicts of the Imperial army with a humanity very rare at this epoch, and everything possible was done to alleviate their sufferings.² His conduct, which was the theme of universal praise, was a fitting climax to a success which had established his reputation as one of the greatest soldiers of his time.³

This really brilliant feat of arms, combined with the repulse of the Flemish invasion in the north and the recovery of Hesdin, which had passed temporarily into possession of the enemy, some trifling successes in Piedmont, and a naval victory off the Neapolitan coast, appears to have inspired the French Court with the most boundless confidence. Henri II refused to believe that, after the terrible losses that Charles V had sustained before Metz, he could have anything more to fear from him, and accordingly proceeded to disband his army and to dissipate in costly fêtes and in lavish gifts to his favourites the money which should have been employed in following up his success. The Emperor, on the other hand, laboured with untiring energy throughout the winter months at the work of reconstituting his shattered legions; and early in the spring, at the moment when the French Court was engaged in celebrating the nuptials of the King's natural daughter, Diane de France, and Orazio Farnese, and "nothing

¹ *Mémoires de Vieilleville.*

² Guise's example was followed by the citizens of Metz, who raised subscriptions for the relief of those who recovered and for the interment of the dead.

³ "He [Guise] is inferior to no one in sagacity, in military experience, or in valour." Letter of Marco Antonio Barbaro, Venetian Ambassador at the Court of France, to the Senate of Venice.

was being talked of but festivities and triumphs and games and pastimes of all kinds,"¹ the alarming intelligence arrived that a large army of Germans, Spaniards, and Netherlanders had invested Théroouenne, the advance-post of France in Artois. Even then, whether from a fatuous belief that Théroouenne was impregnable, or, more probably, from want of money, no effective steps were taken to succour the place, though François de Montmorency and a number of other young gentlemen received permission "to take their pleasure there."

After a siege of two months, Théroouenne was taken by assault, and the Constable's son with it. His life was spared, as were those of a few other men of rank, for whom large ransoms might be expected. But the Imperialists, or, at any rate, the Teutonic portion of them, were implacable in their ardour to avenge their defeat before Metz, and all the rest of the garrison was mercilessly butchered, together with the entire population, without distinction of age or sex; while the town was literally razed to the ground. It never rose again, and, says Henri Martin, "is the only example in our history of a French town which has entirely perished."

After the destruction of Théroouenne, the victorious Imperialists marched upon Hesdin, which, for the third time within a year, was taken by assault, the King's new son-in-law, Orazio Farnese, being killed, fighting gallantly in the breach. The town was razed to the ground, as Théroouenne had been, and the garrison and the inhabitants put to the sword, but, more fortunate than its neighbour, it was subsequently rebuilt.

The tears of his daughter Diane, left a widow within a few months of her marriage, seemed to have aroused the King from his apathy, and at the beginning of August a considerable army was assembled at Amiens, under the orders of the Constable. Its appearance upon the scene was sufficient to paralyse the butchers and incendiaries of Charles V, who promptly raised the

¹ Rabutin, *Commentaires*.

siege of Doullens and fell back towards the Netherlands. But, though Montmorency was subsequently joined by the King, who brought with him reinforcements which raised the strength of the army to 50,000 men, and the war was carried into hostile territory, absolutely nothing was effected, save the temporary occupation of a few unimportant places. It was a military promenade of the most futile kind.

For this fiasco the incapacity of the Constable was mainly responsible, for, though Guise repeatedly urged that they should force an engagement with the Imperialists, much inferior in numbers to themselves, Montmorency, as his biographer M. Decrue is compelled to admit, "recoiled before the slightest suspicion of an obstacle¹; and the King, who regarded himself as his old friend's pupil in military matters, invariably deferred to his opinion. He had soon, moreover, the mortification of being deprived of any independent command, the King, thanks to the insinuations of the Constable, "beginning to fear the popularity of M. de Guyse, and the craftiness of the Cardinal [de Lorraine] his brother."² And when, in June 1554, another large army was assembled for the invasion of the Netherlands, part of it was placed under the orders of Montmorency, while the Prince de la Roche-sur-Yon and the Duc de Nevers shared the command of the remaining troops.

Guise had the good sense to accommodate himself to the situation and to accept with apparent resignation this semi-disgrace of the moment, well aware that his popularity in the Army would increase with each blunder committed by its present leaders, and that the time would soon arrive when he would be able to show how indispensable were his services.

"It is without doubt at this epoch," observes one of the ablest of his biographers, "that he comprehends the advantages of a withdrawal after some brilliant operation. His career is composed henceforth of a series of

¹ *Anne, Duc de Montmorency.*

² *Tavannes, Mémoires.*

intermissions, through which we see him alternately invested with full powers or isolated in an obscure command. He knows how to check himself in time, in order not to give umbrage to the King, and not to force opportunity. From the moment that he has awakened jealousy, he disappears, assured of being summoned at the first crisis. Such he shows himself after the defence of Metz; such we shall see towards the end of his life, at the battle of Dreux; he does not withdraw from the battle-field, but remains there, standing apart, watching for the moment when he will be able to intervene and prove himself the master.”¹

On the present occasion, he had not long to watch. After taking Marienbourg, Bouvines, Dinant, and some unimportant places, and mercilessly ravaging the country,² to avenge the destruction of Théroouenne and Hesdin, the French laid siege to the fort of Renti, on the borders of Artois. The Emperor, who had once more taken the field in person, advanced to the relief of the place, and Guise, with a few thousand men, was detached to watch his movements. A wood called the Bois Guillaume separated the right wing of the Imperialists from the French; but, although it was the key of the whole position, the Constable had neglected to occupy it. To repair this error, of which he foresaw that the enemy would not fail to take advantage, Guise concealed 300 picked arquebusiers in the wood and staitoned a small body of pikemen on its outskirts, with orders that, when attacked, they were to fall back until they had drawn the Imperialists within range of the arquebusiers. These tactics succeeded perfectly, and the enemy's vanguard, which had attacked the pikemen, was driven back in confusion, with considerable loss.

¹ M. Henri Forneron, *les Ducs de Guise et leur époque*.

² Hainaut had already been so devastated in the previous campaign that, on reaching Jametz, the King was obliged to lodge in the cottage of a peasant, whose wife had just given birth to a son. The Cardinal de Lorraine, who had accompanied the army, baptized the child, who was named after the King, his Majesty standing godfather in person.

However, on the morning of August 13, the Imperialists advanced in great force against the wood. Guise sent to warn the King that he was about to have the enemy's entire army on his hands; but his Majesty and the Constable found themselves quite unable to come to a decision until they had held a council of war, and sent no orders. Obligated to act upon his own responsibility, Guise thereupon decided to withdraw gradually his infantry from the wood and attack the Imperialists as they debouched into the open.

Slowly the enemy began to emerge from the trees, the German *reiters* leading the way,¹ the Spanish men-at-arms following. But before the former could reform their ranks, thrown into disorder by the fire of the French arquebusiers and their passage through the wood, Guise launched his men-at-arms with their long lances upon them, and drove them back upon the Spanish cavalry, whom they threw into hopeless confusion. The French light horse and infantry pressed home the advantage gained by the men-at-arms, and the Imperialists were soon in full retreat, with the loss of several hundred men, over twenty standards, and four cannon.²

However, the incapacity of the Constable caused the fruits of this victory to be lost. Instead of sending reinforcements to Guise, which would have enabled him to complete the defeat of the enemy, he remained inactive with his entire army before the walls of Renti, with the result that the Emperor was enabled to rally his troops and fortify his camp so strongly as to be able to defy attack. Moreover, Charles had already succeeded in

¹ The *reiters* carried two or three pistols at their saddle-bows and usually advanced in several lines. When those forming the first line came within pistol-shot of the enemy, they discharged their weapons and then wheeled to the left and rear, when they reformed and recharged their pistols, each line in turn repeating the manœuvre.

² They were small cannon, mounted on four-wheeled carriages, and easily transported, and were called "the Emperor's pistols." According to the Duc d'Aumale, this was the first attempt at light artillery, though the example does not appear to have been followed until the time of Gustavus Adolphus's famous *canons de cuir*.

revictualling Renti, and, as supplies and munitions were both beginning to fail, early in September Henri II raised the siege and led his army back to Compiègne, where it was disbanded. Nevertheless, military critics are agreed that the day of Renti was a brilliant episode in Guise's career. "The sagacity," observes one of them, "with which he seized the right moment for withdrawing his infantry before it was overmatched, no less than the vigorous charge which prevented the enemy deploying as he emerged from the wood, must command our admiration."¹

The conduct of the Constable was, of course, bitterly criticised, and the Guises and their partisans did not hesitate to declare that the retreat had been "sounded by the blast of jealousy." But disinterested observers also condemned it. "The responsibility for these checks," writes the Venetian Ambassador Capello, "belongs to the Constable, who formerly passed for a pusillanimous man, but is now regarded as a base poltroon (*stimato vilissimo*), since he was afraid to pursue a beaten and almost flying enemy. He is scoffed at everywhere. At the Court and in places of public resort, sonnets and Latin verses are circulated, in which he is called a coward and a man without heart."

The charge that Montmorency was wanting in courage is unjust, for personally he was a very brave man, as he showed in the following year at the disastrous battle of Saint-Quentin. But, on the other hand, he was undoubtedly bitterly jealous of the military reputation which Guise had acquired by his brilliant defence of Metz; and there was probably a good deal of truth in the accusation so freely brought against him by the rival faction that he had neglected to pursue the retreating Imperialists after Renti, from an unwillingness to complete a victory whose credit belonged to Guise rather than to himself.

The Constable found a warm defender in his nephew

¹ Duc d'Aumale, *Histoire des Princes de Condé*.

Gaspard de Coligny, who, on the death of Annebaut in 1552, had been created Admiral of France. At Renti, he had led the charge against the Imperialists, and, taking advantage of the fact that, at this epoch, people were easily tempted to attribute the gain of a battle to the arm which had struck the blows, rather than to the brain which had directed them, he now claimed for himself alone the honour of the victory. This claim was prompted not by vanity, but by a generous desire to parry the attacks of which his uncle was the object. Guise was naturally exasperated at such a pretension, the more so that Coligny had actually gone so far as to cast reflections on his personal courage; and a violent altercation took place between them, in the presence of the King. Henri II intervened, and a formal reconciliation was effected. Nevertheless, from that hour, a bitter enmity divided these two great soldiers, which was to entail disastrous consequences both to themselves and to their country.

Both sides were by this time equally weary of the war. The enormous cost of the large armies she had raised had exhausted the resources of France. The Emperor, broken in health and disgusted with the failure of his cherished schemes for religious unity and Imperial omnipotence, desired to shift the burden of his vast responsibilities on to younger shoulders and end his days in retirement; and, to accomplish the delicate and complicated acts which his abdication would entail, peace was essential. England, whom Charles had vainly endeavoured to drag into the war,¹ tendered her good offices, and in May 1555 negotiations were opened at Marcq, near Calais. Nothing came of them; but towards the close of the year the belligerents decided to treat directly with one another, and, though their common pretensions rendered the conclusion of a

¹ Edward VI had died in July 1553, and a year later, to the great alarm of France, his successor Queen Mary had married Philip of Spain.

definite peace impossible, a truce of five years was agreed upon and signed at the Abbey of Vaucelles, in Hainaut (February 15, 1556), during which communications by land and sea were to be re-established and each sovereign was to remain in possession of his own conquests. France thus retained the Three Bishoprics and the fortresses she had reduced in Piedmont.

Charles V had not waited for the formal conclusion of the Truce of Vaucelles to divest himself of the crowns whose weight his increasing infirmities made it impossible for him any longer to support. On October 25, 1555, he had abdicated in his son Philip's favour the sovereignty of the Netherlands, and in January 1556 had ceded to him the kingdoms of Aragon, Castile, Sicily, and Naples. In order that Ferdinand of Austria might select a favourable moment for securing his own election as Emperor, he retained the Imperial diadem until the following August, and a few weeks later sailed for Spain, to spend the brief span of life which remained to him in the cloistral solitude of Yuste. Thus disappeared from the scene the man who for forty years had been the soul of all the wars which had desolated Christendom; but those who imagined that this event was to be the signal for an era of peace were speedily disillusioned.

CHAPTER XII

The Cardinal Caraffa elected Pope, under the title of Paul IV—His pride and arrogance—His hatred of the Spaniards, whose domination in Italy he is determined to overthrow—Despatch of the Cardinal Caraffa to France to induce Henri II to break the Truce of Vaucelles—The Cardinal's overtures are repulsed by Montmorency, but warmly received by the Guises—Audacious projects of the Duc de Guise and the Cardinal de Lorraine—The Constable renounces his opposition and joins the Guises and Madame de Valentinois in counselling war—Singular reason for this change of front—Guise's Italian expedition—He is delayed in Rome by the refusal of the Caraffi to furnish him with the troops promised—Duel between an Italian and a Gascon officer on Monte Rotondo—Unsuccessful invasion of Naples—Guise receives orders to return to France.

A few months before Charles V descended from a throne in order to enter the obscurity of the cloister, a monk, twenty-four years older than the Emperor, emerged from the obscurity of the cloister in order to mount a throne. This monk was Giovanni Pietro Caraffa, one of the founders of the Theatine Order, who, in May 1555, notwithstanding the strenuous opposition of the Imperial party in the Sacred College, was elected Pope, under the title of Paul IV. People had regarded him as a sage and a saint, but scarcely had he become Pope, than he was transformed. He sat for three hours over his dinner, which consisted of twenty-five courses, and scandal asserted that he drank even more than he ate, preferring the dark and heady wines of his native Naples. He entertained the most extravagant notions of the Papal prerogative, and his pride was so great, his regard for etiquette so punctilious, that the foreign Ministers trembled when they approached him; while no one dared to contradict him, since to dissent from any opinion which his Holiness condescended to express was an unforgivable offence.

Paul hated Charles V ; he hated him as the oppressor of his compatriots, the Neapolitans, and he hated him still more as the persecutor of his relatives, whom he had despoiled of their Neapolitan estates. From the moment of his election, he had resolved to leave no means untried to overthrow the Spanish domination in Italy, and, finding that one of his nephews, Carlo Caraffa, shared his antipathy to the Spaniards, he created him a cardinal and gave him his entire confidence, notwithstanding the fact that he was a man of notoriously evil life, who had been a leader of *condottieri* and had committed at least two assassinations.

The new Pope began operations by issuing a decree of banishment against the Sforzi, the Colonna, and other families of the Imperial party in the States of the Church, and confiscating their lands, which he bestowed as fiefs upon two other nephews, whom he created Duke of Paliano and Count of Montebello ; and on December 16, 1555, he signed with the Cardinal de Lorraine, acting on behalf of France, a treaty with Henri II, whereby it was arranged that the two sovereigns should make a combined attack upon the Spaniards and their allies in Italy and re-establish the Republic of Florence, by the expulsion of Cosimo de' Medici. In the event of the Spaniards being expelled from the Milanese, the Pope promised the investiture of the duchy to the King's second son, the Duc d'Orléans. Just, however, as the Papal troops were about to invade the Kingdom of Naples, Paul learned, to his intense disgust, of the conclusion of the Truce of Vaucelles. It was a serious check to his schemes ; nevertheless, his hatred of the "accursed Spaniards" was far too intense to permit him to abandon them, and, urged on by Carlo Caraffa, he forthwith determined to employ every persuasion to induce Henri II to break the truce. The *ex-condottiere* was accordingly despatched as Legate to France, with the avowed mission of bringing about a definite peace in Europe, but with the secret task of

engaging the French Government in a fresh Italian enterprise.

The cardinal arrived at Fontainebleau, bearing a sword and a rosary, both blessed by the Holy Father, which he presented to the King and Queen respectively. As a concession to the obligation of his official charge, he discoursed eloquently at his first audience on the blessings of peace, but no one doubted that he brought war under his red robe. Desirous of gaining the support of those who directed the will of the feeble King, he began by addressing himself to the Constable, who was greatly disturbed by his proposals. It had always been Montmorency's most cherished dream to bring about a close alliance between the Holy See, France, and the House of Austria, in order to combat the Turks and the Reformers, and suddenly the Pope proposed to make war on the Catholic King and appealed to the King of France for assistance, at the very moment when the Truce of Vaucelles had partially reconciled France and Spain! Moreover, the rupture of the truce would involve the Duc de Guise, who, since his military talents had, for the time being, ceased to be of service, was much less to be feared as a rival, being given fresh opportunities of acquiring distinction, and of establishing further claims on his sovereign's gratitude.

Accordingly, the Constable reminded the Legate that former alliances between France and the Holy See had invariably terminated with the lives of the aged Pontiffs with whom they had been contracted; that to sacrifice important interests in return for the promises of a Power whose policy changed every three or four years, at the accession of each new Sovereign, was always a hazardous speculation, and that, having regard to the exceptionally advanced age of Paul IV, already on the verge of eighty, he could not see his way to recommend the acceptance of his proposals.

Repulsed by the Constable, Caraffa "addressed himself to those who occupied the second place in the

favour of the King, to wit, Messieurs de Guise,"¹ from whom he met with a very different reception. The mortification of Paul IV at the termination of hostilities with the Emperor had been shared by the Guises, who had built great hopes on the Treaty which the Cardinal de Lorraine had just previously concluded with the Holy See, and had formed audacious projects on Italy for their personal aggrandizement. For they themselves had proposed to be the principal gainers by this alliance. The duke hoped that a great conflagration in Italy might afford him the chance of seizing the crown of Naples, which his ancestors of the House of Anjou had worn, and his claims to which had been strengthened by his marriage with a grand-daughter of Louis XII; the cardinal aimed at the papal tiara, and believed that, when the aged Pontiff should lay it aside, the presence of the French armies in Italy might not be without influence on the decision of the Conclave.

These pretensions the crafty Italian did not fail to encourage, and, with the idea of gaining the good-will of Madame de Valentinois, even hinted at the possibility of a crown in Italy for her son-in-law, the Duc d'Aumale. His success, so far as the Lorraine princes and the mistress were concerned, was complete, and they united in urging the King to break the truce.

Between the importunities of the Guises and the warnings of the Constable, Henri II found himself in a difficult position; but it is probable that he would have eventually decided against war, had not Montmorency suddenly executed a complete *volte face*, and not only withdrawn his opposition to the proposals of the Caraffi, but joined his instances to those of Diane and the Guises to secure their acceptance. The motive for this sudden change of front was a singular one.

After the death of Orazio Farnese at the storming of Hesdin, in July 1553, Henri II had proposed to the Constable to bestow the young widow's hand on Mont-

¹ *Mémoires de Tavannes.*

morency's eldest son, François. The Constable was, of course, transported with joy at the prospect of an alliance with the Royal Family, which could not fail to discount to some extent the advantages which the Guises would obtain from the approaching marriage of Mary Stuart with the Dauphin; and, without troubling his head about his son's feelings in the matter—François, who, it will be remembered, had been taken prisoner at the fall of Théroutenne, was at this time a captive in the Netherlands—accepted with gratitude his Majesty's gracious proposal.

The arrangements for the projected union were soon made. Henri II assured to his future son-in-law the governments of Paris and of the Île de France, which would keep him near the Court, the collar of the Order of Saint-Michel, and the reversion of his father's office of Grand Master. To his daughter he gave, as dowry, the counties of Mantes and Meulan, and he also contributed a sum of 72,000 livres towards the princely ransom which the Imperialists demanded for the prospective bridegroom.

The Constable could scarcely restrain his elation, but a rude shock was in store for him. For when François recovered his liberty and returned to France, he learned, to his indescribable mortification, that his son's affections were already engaged; he had succumbed to the attractions of one of the Queen's maids of honour, Mlle de Piennes, "one of the most beautiful, virtuous, and accomplished ladies of the Court,"¹ had made her a solemn promise of marriage, in the presence of witnesses, and had proceeded to act as though they were already wed.

For a fortnight the Constable remained shut up in his hôtel in Paris, "weeping and groaning," while all the Court came to offer him their condolences, some no doubt sincere, but most, we fear, ironical, since the old gentleman was not exactly beloved. Then grief

¹ Brantôme.

gave way to the most terrible rage, which his family in vain endeavoured to pacify. No matter how great the scandal might be, he swore that François should be separated from the designing minx who had persuaded him to forget the duty which he owed his father; and on October 5, 1556, the two lovers were summoned before a commission of bishops and Councillors of State at the Louvre. They pleaded that they were not aware that clandestine marriages were culpable; but this excuse was judged insufficient, and Mlle de Piennes was shut up in the Couvent des Filles-Dieu, while François, terrified by the paternal threats, started for Rome to solicit from the Pope the annulment of his marriage. And it was to conciliate Paul IV and to obtain from the intriguing old Pontiff the dispensation which would set his son free to marry the natural daughter of the King that the Constable had turned his back upon the principles which had always guided his policy, renounced his opposition to the demands of the Caraffi, and decided Henri II to break his most solemn engagements and plunge into a war which was to bring France into one of the most perilous situations in which she had ever been placed.¹

It is not easy to explain how two such experienced soldiers as Guise and the Constable could possibly have

¹ And the irony of it all was that, in February 1557, Paul IV, after keeping the unfortunate Constable on tenter-hooks for some months, refused to grant the dispensation demanded, on the ground that the Church, previous to the Council of Trent, had recognised marriages contracted on a simple mutual promise. Probably, the Guises, all-powerful just then at Rome, were no strangers to this decision. The civil power, however, came to Montmorency's aid, and on March 1 of that year a royal edict appeared—the famous *Édit ambitieux*—which declared all promises of marriage, past and present, made by children without the parental sanction null and void, even if the parties were of full age. Thus, all impediment to the alliance of the House of Montmorency with the Royal Family was removed, and the marriage of François and the widow of Orazio Farnese, who before the first marriage had been given the rank of a granddaughter of France, was duly celebrated; and, contrary to what one might expect, proved an exceptionally happy one. As for the victim of the Constable's ambition, she was released from her convent, and eventually found a husband in Florimond Robertet, Secretary of State.

failed to comprehend that to despatch a French army to Southern Italy was to lay the country open to an invasion; for the last war had entailed so great a drain upon the Treasury that there was no money forthcoming for the hire of foreign mercenaries, and to raise troops for the Italian expedition it was necessary to reduce the garrisons on all the frontiers. It is certain that neither the duke nor the Constable were so fatuous as to cherish the illusion that a truce broken in Italy would be respected in Flanders, or that Philip II, who hemmed in the frontiers and coasts of France by Spain and the Franche-Comté, the Netherlands and England, would fail to take advantage of the comparatively defenceless state of the kingdom; indeed, it was the French themselves who began hostilities on the northern frontier. We must therefore conclude that both deliberately sacrificed the safety of the kingdom to their own interests, though, in fairness to Montmorency, it should be observed that, always full of confidence in himself, he believed that, in the event of an invasion being attempted on a really formidable scale, he would have time to assemble the reserves and recruit sufficient mercenaries to furnish him with a force capable of resisting it.

War having been decided upon, the Legate, in the name of the Pope, absolved Henri II from his oath to observe the Truce of Vaucelles, and it was arranged that the Army of Italy should be placed under the command of Guise, who was invested with full authority to act according to his discretion, unhampered by any orders from the Government. In embarking upon this Italian enterprise, the duke was momentarily forgetful of the example set him by his prudent father, who had preferred to make his military reputation and his fortune by the successful defence of the frontiers and capital of France and to leave to more adventurous spirits the chances of the Italian wars, for which so many thousands of gallant gentlemen had set out never to return, and

in which so many French generals had lost both reputation and life. Probably, the desire to be the sole chief of an army, to be no longer constrained by the jealous authority of the Constable, of feeling himself the master, had prompted to some extent this departure from the traditional caution of his family. But there can be no doubt that his chief motive is to be found in the hope of realising that ambitious and long-cherished project of the House of Lorraine—the recovery of the crown which their Angevin ancestors had worn.

The Truce of Vaucelles was not denounced, and the King continued to address false assurances of friendship to Philip II, while preparations were being made to wrest from the latter the Kingdom of Naples. The Pope, on his side, had not even waited for the promise of French intervention to provoke his Catholic Majesty, and in September 1556, Alva, now Viceroy of Naples, received orders to occupy the Papal States, and invaded the Campagna. Paul IV had no troops ready to oppose him except the city militia of Rome, very brilliant at reviews, but quite incapable of confronting the Spanish veterans; and Alva, who had quickly seized Tivoli and Ostia, might easily have taken Rome. However, in accordance with the instructions of Philip II, who professed that his only desire was to assure the peace of Christendom, he displayed great moderation, and contented himself with blockading the city and repulsing the occasional attacks which the forces which Paul IV had now assembled made upon his troops.

Alva's invasion furnished France with a *casus belli*, but the efforts of Henri II to draw into the Pontifical alliance several Italian States met with little success; the Republic of Siena and the Duke of Ferrara alone joined it. In the last days of December, Guise crossed the Alps at the head of some 13,000 men and a great number of noble volunteers, who had eagerly solicited permission to serve under his victorious banner.

His staff included the Duc d'Aumale, the Duc de

Nemours, Tavannes, Montluc, and other experienced chiefs. In the plain of the Po, he was joined by the Maréchal de Brissac and the Army of Piedmont, and their united forces marched on Valenza and carried it by assault. Almost simultaneously hostilities began on the northern frontier, where Coligny, after an unsuccessful attempt to surprise Douai, took and burned Lens, in Artois; and on January 31, 1557, war was formally declared.

Brissac, who had commanded the French forces in Piedmont since the beginning of the reign, strongly advised Guise to confine his operations, for the present, to the Milanese, in which the Spaniards were just then so weak that he would probably experience little difficulty in reducing the whole duchy to submission. If he had followed this advice, he would have rendered a real service to his country and have been spared much disappointment. But he sacrificed the interests of France to his own designs on Naples and to the importunities of the Pope, who feared an attack by the Spaniards on Rome and a repetition of the horrors which had accompanied its sack by Bourbon's soldiery in 1527; and pushed on to the Eternal City, which he entered on March 2. Here he wasted a full month, in disputes with the Cardinal Caraffa, who "kept him entertained by all the delights, banquets, courtesans, virgins, and married women which this whirlpool of abomination was accustomed to provide,"¹ but failed to furnish him with the money and troops promised. "The Pope was contented to be the soul of the enterprise of which France was to furnish the body."²

It is probable that the Cardinal Caraffa had already been bribed by the agents of Philip II to betray his uncle and the French general; any way, his conduct was most suspicious, and of the 15,000 men which he had been promised, all that Guise was able to obtain were some 1,200. Moreover, these Italian auxiliaries

¹ *Mémoires de Vieilleville.*

² Froude, *History of England.*

soon began to quarrel with the French; and a judicial duel, with formalities similar to those observed at the celebrated combat between Jarnac and La Chataigneraie, fought at Saint-Germain-en-Laye nine years before, took place on Monte Rotondo, where Guise's army was encamped, between an Italian officer and a Gascon captain named Prouillan. The latter, it appears, had indulged in various outrageous and unsavoury observations respecting Italians in general, and his opponent had "demanded a field," in order to vindicate the honour of his country. "When they had entered the lists, and all the formalities had been completed, Fortune willed that the Italian should deliver so great and so villainous a sword-cut on the ham-string of Prouillan, that he fell to the ground without power to rise again. The Italian confiscated his enemy's weapons, quitted the lists with his second, confidants and friends, and, entering a coach, with the weapons of his enemy borne before him in token of triumph, proceeded to Rome and made his entry amidst great rejoicing and applause and loud cries of 'Victory! The honour of the country is saved!'"¹

Incidents of this kind naturally did not make for effective co-operation between the troops of the two nations, and Guise appears to have experienced considerable difficulty in getting his orders obeyed by the Italian officers. Of the good faith of the Cardinal Caraffa he was becoming more and more suspicious, and wrote to Henri II that "he had a head calculated to ruin every one."² But he himself was acting in a very equivocal manner, for, while he counted on keeping for himself the crown of Naples, he signed, on behalf of France, a treaty with the Pope, which stipulated that that kingdom, when conquered, should be given to the Duc d'Orléans, second son of Henri II, who was to espouse a relative of the Holy Father.

Finally, in the first week in April, he quitted Rome,

¹ Brantôme, *les Duels*.

² Guise, *Mémoires-journaux*.

penetrated into the Abruzzi, stormed and sacked Campli and laid siege to Civitella, which he had expected to reduce without much difficulty. But this town was stubbornly defended, the inhabitants, exasperated by the cruelties which the invaders had committed at Campli, being resolved, they declared, to perish of hunger rather than submit to a similar fate. The supplies and munitions of the besiegers began to fail, for, though the Caraffi had assured Guise that they would furnish him with everything necessary for the success of the expedition, they did not send him so much as a loaf of bread or a sack of powder ; in fact, they appeared to have forgotten him altogether. Guise lost his temper, complained bitterly to the Marquis Antonio Caraffa, who commanded the Papal contingent, of the conduct of his uncle, and, when the marquis attempted to defend his august relative, "insulted him and struck him with a silver plate."¹ However, the French succeeded in cutting off the water-supply of the town, and, though the inhabitants were prepared to endure the pangs of hunger, they could not face thirst in addition, and were on the point of capitulating, when the weather suddenly changed and rain fell almost incessantly. "God has become Spanish!" exclaimed Guise bitterly, and, after two unsuccessful attempts to take the place by assault, he raised the siege and marched against Alva, who, on the approach of the French, had evacuated the places he had occupied in the States of the Church and retreated into Neapolitan territory.

The astute Spaniard, however, though superior in force to Guise, obstinately declined to give battle, preferring to harass his adversary and wear out his army, unaccustomed to the severe heat of the Neapolitan summer and compelled, owing to the unfulfilled promises of the Caraffi, to live entirely upon the country. Fever and desertion soon began to thin the ranks of the French, and Guise, thoroughly disgusted with his

¹ *Mémoires de Tavannes.*

allies, wisely decided to retreat while his army still remained comparatively intact, and fell back to Tivoli, and finally to Rome, where, at the beginning of August, he received orders from Henri II to return to France.

Paul IV's indignation on finding himself abandoned by the French knew no bounds. "Go, then!" said he, when Guise came to take leave of him; "you have done little for your King's service, still less for the Church, and nothing at all for your own honour!" Such language came rather badly from the Holy Father, who, for some weeks past, under pressure from his nephews and the peace party at the Pontifical Court, had been negotiating with his 'prodigal son'—as he called Philip II—behind his ally's back; and it was, in point of fact, the discovery of these intrigues by the French Government that had led to Guise's recall.¹ The duke proceeded to Ostia, whence he embarked for France, while Tavannes and Marillac brought back the army over the Alps. A month later, the Pope made peace with Spain on terms very much more advantageous than he deserved, and turned his energies to the suppression of heresy and to the disciplining of the Roman clergy, who certainly needed it.

¹ And not the disaster of Saint-Quentin, as Henri Martin, M. Forneron, and other historians seem to imagine. The defeat occurred some days after the orders for the recall of Guise were despatched.

CHAPTER XIII

Formidable invasion of Picardy by the Spaniards—Disastrous defeat of the Constable at Saint-Quentin—Consternation in Paris—The heroic defence of Saint-Quentin by Coligny saves the situation—Return of Guise, who is received with enthusiasm—He is appointed Lieutenant-General of the Kingdom—He determines on an attempt to recover Calais and expel the English from France—Failure of the English Government to reinforce the garrisons of Calais and Guines—Calais is taken after a siege of six days—Harsh treatment of the inhabitants—Gallant defence of Guines by Lord Grey de Wilton, who is, however, obliged to surrender—The Guises turn the duke's brilliant military success to account by hastening the marriage of their niece, Mary Stuart, to the Dauphin.

PHILIP II had not failed to profit by the criminal folly of the French Government in sacrificing the safety of the country to engage in a costly foreign enterprise, at the bidding of an ambitious family which preferred its own to the national interest. He assembled in the Netherlands an army of 60,000 men under the command of Emmanuel Philibert, Duke of Savoy; and, in conjunction with Mary, succeeded, thanks to the injudicious assistance rendered by Henri II to Sir Thomas Stafford's foolhardy descent upon the Yorkshire coast, which had aroused great irritation in England, in dragging that country into the war.

Without, however, awaiting the arrival of the English contingent, the Duke of Savoy assumed the offensive, and, after a feint in the direction of Champagne, invaded Picardy, and, at the beginning of August, laid siege to Saint-Quentin, on the Somme, one of the bulwarks of Paris. Coligny, Governor of Picardy, with a few hundred men, succeeded in throwing himself into the place before the investment was completed, and actively organised the defence; but the fortifications

of Saint-Quentin were old-fashioned and in a very bad state of repair, and there was little ammunition; and he perceived that, unless help speedily arrived, its fate was sealed.

Realising the importance of succouring a town whose fall would open the road to the capital, the Constable hastened northwards with all the troops he could muster. But his army, though it contained a great number of nobles and gentlemen, was so vastly inferior to the enemy in numbers that he dared not risk an engagement; and he therefore decided merely to make a feint against the besiegers' lines, and, under cover of this movement, to throw 2,000 men under Coligny's brother, the Sieur d'Andelot, and a quantity of provisions and ammunition into the town. This accomplished, he intended to retire. He boasted that he was going to show the Duke of Savoy "a trick of the old stager"; but he only succeeded in once more demonstrating his absolute unfitness for the command of an army.

Owing to the delay caused by the non-arrival of the boats required to transport the reinforcements and supplies for the beleaguered town across the Somme, which, by some misunderstanding, had been left in the rear of the army, Andelot only succeeded in getting into the town with a mere handful of men; and when Montmorency began to retire, he found that the enemy had crossed the river by a ford of which he appears to have been in ignorance, seized the only road by which he could retreat, and cut his army right in two.

Surprised and hopelessly outnumbered, the French were completely routed. The Duc de Nevers, Condé, and François de Montmorency succeeded in effecting their retreat to La Fère with the troops which they commanded. But one of the Bourbon princes, Jean, Comte d'Enghien, Montmorency's son-in-law the Vicomte de Turenne, and over 3,000 men were killed, including 600 gentlemen, and more than 7,000 made prisoners, among whom were the Constable himself, his fourth son

Montmorency-Montbérón, Saint-André, Longueville, La Rochefoucauld, and Gontaut-Biron—in fact, the flower of the French nobility. It was a second Pavia.

The news of the battle of Saint-Quentin—or Saint-Laurent, as contemporary writers call it (It was fought on St. Lawrence's Day, August 10), created the utmost consternation in Paris; and it was feared that the Duke of Savoy would mask Saint-Quentin with a small force, overwhelm the *débris* of the routed army at La Fère, and march straight upon the capital. This, in fact, was the course which Philibert was anxious to pursue; "But," says Montluc, "God was pleased miraculously to deprive the King of Spain of his right judgment,"¹ and, anticipating that Saint-Quentin would prove an easy prey, he ordered the duke to remain before the town until it had fallen.

Saint-Quentin, however, proved a much more serious obstacle than Philip had bargained for. Without the least hope of saving the town, without the smallest prospect of succour from outside, protected only by feeble ramparts, which were rapidly crumbling to ruin before the cannon of the besiegers, Coligny, seconded by his brother Andelot and the engineer Saint-Rémy, who had rendered such valuable assistance in the defence of Metz, succeeded in inspiring the garrison and the inhabitants to the most heroic efforts. If they capitulated, he told them, nothing could save Paris; while, on the other hand, every day, every hour of resistance, meant so much more time for the country to arm and for the Army of Naples to return.

Roused to the highest pitch of patriotic devotion by the noble words and splendid example of their leader, officers, soldiers, and citizens, well aware that the town was doomed and themselves with it, since they could expect no mercy at the hands of the ferocious enemy whose plans they were thwarting, prolonged their heroic defence for nearly three weeks; and it was only

¹ *Commentaires.*



GASPARD DE COLIGNY (1570), ADMIRAL OF FRANCE.

From a photograph by A. Giraudon, Paris, after a drawing in the Bibliothèque Nationale, by François Clouet.

on August 19, by which time eleven breaches had been made in the walls, that Saint-Quentin was carried by assault. With the exception of a few wounded officers of high rank, amongst whom were Coligny and his brother, spared for the sake of ransom, every man in the town was put to the sword. The women were reserved for a time for the gratification of Spanish cruelty and German lust, and then driven naked out of the town, to die of hunger and exhaustion on the roads.

But they did not die in vain; the heroic defence of Saint-Quentin had saved the situation. While the Spaniards and their allies were battering down its feeble walls, Paris, recovering from its first alarm, had voted, in response to an eloquent harangue from Catherine de' Medici, who showed, in this crisis, an admirable courage and presence of mind, a sum of 300,000 livres, an example which was followed by the principal towns of the kingdom; new companies of men-at-arms and infantry had been raised; mercenaries brought from Switzerland and Germany, and the best general whom France possessed, summoned to return with all possible speed, was approaching. "The advantage which my enemies have gained over me," wrote Henri II to Guise, "is not so great but that I have good hope, with the aid of God, of shortly having revenge."

The duke, who arrived at Saint-Germain, on October 6, had found a clear field awaiting him; the Constable and some of the greatest nobles of France were in captivity, and the Montmorency party utterly discredited by the disaster of Saint-Quentin, which had caused the Neapolitan fiasco to be forgotten. It was upon the defender of Metz that all the hopes of France were now centred. Enthusiastic acclamations greeted him in every town and village through which he passed on his journey from the coast; the country *noblesse* armed themselves and followed in his train, and he was already at the head of a little army when he reached the Court, where the King hastened to nominate him Lieutenant-General of

the Kingdom, despatched orders to the governors of every province and city in the realm enjoining them to obey the Duc de Guise as they would himself, and caused all the Parlements to register the letters-patent which created these extraordinary powers.

Extensive as were the powers thus conferred upon Guise, they were rendered still greater by the universal enthusiasm. "In France," observes one of the duke's biographers, "people readily yield to the temptation of regarding the fortune of the country embodied in a single man, and of delivering themselves unreservedly to the worship of the idol of the moment. So frequently in our history do we find this sentiment, that one can scarcely cite a movement which is not translated by a name. The nation does not know how to save itself unless it improvises a saviour."¹

Guise was too astute to allow his head to be turned by the extraordinary popularity of which he had suddenly become the object, and was well aware that it would speedily subside if he did not contrive to justify it by some brilliant success. There was no longer any immediate danger to fear from the invaders, who, disappointed in their expectation of finding Paris unprepared, had contented themselves with reducing Noyon and Ham and ravaging the surrounding country; and early in November the inability and unwillingness of Philip II to furnish the money to pay the troops had obliged the Duke of Savoy to disband his army. Guise might have taken advantage of his retirement to recover Saint-Quentin, and afterwards to make an incursion into the Netherlands; but the difficulties of a winter campaign in the ruined Vermandois and amidst the labyrinth of fortified places which defended the Flemish frontier caused him to discard this project, which, besides, offered but little chance of glory, for one which would gratify the national pride and assure to himself an immense and, he believed, a permanent popularity:

¹ M. Henri Forneron, *les Ducs de Guise et leur époque*.

the taking of Calais and the final expulsion of the English from French soil.

Calais, wrested from France by Edward III in 1547, had remained for more than two hundred years the capital of a little English province, which constituted not only a mutilation of French territory, but a base for a foreign invasion; at once a humiliation and a perpetual menace. Nothing could possibly appeal more forcibly to the imagination of a proud and patriotic people than the recovery of a town so long peaceably abandoned to its conquerors, on the very morrow of one of the most disastrous defeats which the country had ever sustained. Nothing, besides, could be more mortifying to Philip II, or more calculated to ruin his authority with the English people, whom he and his unfortunate consort had dragged against their will into the war, than the discovery that he had brought their Sovereign, by way of dowry, the loss of Calais.

The loss and recovery of Boulogne had naturally drawn attention to Calais, and the question of an attempt upon it appears to have been several times discussed. If we are to believe Brantôme, Coligny was "the first inventor of this enterprise," and in the previous year had drawn up elaborate plans of attack. Both Brantôme and the Huguenot historian La Place assert that, in 1557, it was Henri II who suggested it, and the latter adds that the King insisted on Guise undertaking the expedition, although the duke, either because he believed the undertaking impossible, or because he desired to exaggerate its difficulties in order to enhance the merits of his expected success, resisted for some time. But, whoever ought to be given the credit of the idea, there can be no question that the merit of its execution belongs entirely to Guise.

The Calais Pale comprised three forts: Calais itself and the two outlying forts of Guines and Hames; the former lying about three miles from Calais; the latter between the two, equidistant from both. Two fortresses

defended the approaches to Calais ; one, called by the French Neuillay, and by the English Newnham Bridge, commanded the only road across the marshes ; the other, the Rysbank, protected the approach from the dunes along the shore, and commanded the entrance to the harbour and the town. There was also a smaller work called the Sandgate, which, as its name implies, covered the entrance to the dunes. At Neuillay there were sluices from which, at high water, the sea could be let in over the marshes.

Calais had been so long in the possession of the English that they had come to regard it as impregnable, and during the winter, when they considered the town sufficiently protected by Nature, it was the custom to keep but a few hundred men there. The fortifications, as well as those of Guines and Hames, had been repaired by Henry VIII in 1541, but they had again been allowed to fall into ruin.

Guise made his preparations, which occupied him two months—from the end of October to the end of December 1557—with the utmost secrecy and care, writing all his despatches with his own hand, so that there might be no possibility of misunderstanding. Towards the end of December all was in readiness, and the troops began assembling at Abbeville. However, the secret had not been so well kept but that a vague rumour had reached Lord Grey de Wilton, the Governor of Guines, that danger was near, and he had duly reported it to the English Government, adding that neither Guines nor Calais were sufficiently garrisoned or provisioned for a siege. By the 27th, the rumour had become more definite and more alarming : Guise was at Compiègne, and a considerable force had suddenly made its appearance at Abbeville. Grey and Lord Wentworth, who commanded at Calais, addressed a joint letter to the Queen, informing her of this and pressing for reinforcements. Mary gave orders for troops to be raised ; but on the 31st, in answer to an

urgent despatch from Wentworth, she wrote that "she had intelligence that no enterprise was intended against Calais or the Pale," and that she had therefore countermanded them.

This letter—the death-knell of English rule in France—was crossed by another from Grey, in which he informed the Queen that there were thirty or forty vessels in the harbour of Ambleteuse, two being fitted out as floating batteries, while the rest were loaded with ladders, hurdles, and all materials for a siege, and that there were 24,000 men encamped above Boulogne, whose objective was undoubtedly Calais.¹

Next day, in fact (New Year's Day, 1557), Calais was invested, and, on the following morning, the French advanced in force against the fort of Neuillay and attempted to take it by assault. The attack was gallantly repulsed, but before evening Guise had carried both the Sandgate and Rysbank forts, thus obtaining command of the harbour and cutting off all communication with England, though a fast-sailing vessel succeeded in getting out of the roads just in time and carrying a despairing and unfinished letter from Wentworth to the Queen.

Nothing now could save the town, which was only garrisoned by 500 men, unprovisioned for a siege, and exposed to a furious cannonade from the French batteries at the Rysbank,² except the prompt advance of a relieving army from the Netherlands. The Duke of Savoy hurriedly collected some Spanish troops at Grave-lines, and sent to England for assistance; but when the English troops were ready to embark, there were no ships to transport them. The Spaniards, unaided,

¹ Froude, *History of England*.

² Guise had also placed a battery of twelve cannon between the Rysbank and the citadel, in the sea itself, which bombarded the citadel at low tide. "At high tide it was necessary to withdraw and abandon the artillery and the gabions, which were so fashioned, held and retained by anchors and piles, that the sea could not move them at all; and when the sea retired, the gunners returned to the battery" (Guise, *Mémoires-journaux*).

advanced along the shore and made a really gallant attempt to break the besiegers' lines and force their way into the town; but the odds against them were too overwhelming, and they were easily repulsed.

On the 4th, Guise, perceiving that a breach, narrow, but practicable, had been effected in the ramparts of the citadel, gave orders for the assault and carried the place at the first attempt. Wentworth, after an unsuccessful counter-attack, withdrew into the town, and, on the 6th, recognising that further resistance was useless and would probably involve the slaughter of both soldiers and citizens, demanded a parley and accepted the terms which Guise offered him.

These certainly did not err on the side of magnanimity. The garrison and the inhabitants of Calais were to be permitted to return to England with their lives and nothing more; Wentworth himself and fifty others to remain as prisoners. The town and all that it contained was to be surrendered to the conqueror.

Thus, thanks to the military genius of Guise and the disgraceful incapacity of the English Government, a siege of six days had sufficed to give France possession of a town which had been lost to her for more than two centuries, and above the gates of which had once stood the following boastful inscription:

Then shall the Frenchmen Calais win,
When iron and lead like cork shall swim.

Although it was an age in which people were accustomed to see the vanquished treated with barbarity, Guise is, nevertheless, reproached by some contemporary French writers with his treatment of the unfortunate citizens of Calais, whom "he obliged to remain on the sea-shore for two whole days, and in winter, with their sick and children, to await vessels to carry them to England."¹

¹ *Mémoires de Vieilleville.*

The booty found in the town and on the ships in the harbour was very considerable, and over a million gold crowns are said to have been distributed among the victors.

Calais was lost ; but Guines might perhaps have been saved, had not the scandalous ineptitude of the English Government prevented reinforcements being despatched. "The resolution of one day alternated with the hesitation of the next, and nothing was done."¹ Nevertheless, Grey, a fierce old warrior who, though his jaw had been broken and his cheek laid open by a spear-thrust, had continued the pursuit of the Scots at Pinkie until he was almost choked by blood, made an heroic defence. Since it was impossible to hold the town with the small force at his disposal, which scarcely exceeded a thousand men, only part of whom were English, the rest being Spaniards and Burgundians, he evacuated it, after burning the houses, and retired into the castle, where he successfully repulsed more than one assault. But by the 19th the garrison's powder was exhausted, and those who remained alive retreated into the keep, dragging with them their leader, who, in despair at seeing them give way, had mounted the ruined rampart, "wishing that some shot would take him." Guise sent a trumpeter to propose a parley, and he and Grey had an interview in the French camp, where the duke offered to allow the garrison to depart with their arms, and "every man a crown in his purse," though their commander and some of his principal officers were to remain as prisoners. Grey insisted that the garrison should be authorised to march out with colours flying ; and, when this demand was refused, announced his determination to fight to the last. His men, however, were of a different mind, and refused to strike another blow ; and, just as the French were placing the scaling-ladders against the walls, he surrendered.

A few days later, Hames capitulated, and the last

¹ Froude.

remnant of the continental dominions of the Plantagenets was lost. Guise's brilliant campaign, which in a few days had effaced two centuries of humiliating recollections, made him a national and popular hero. He and his brother, the Cardinal de Lorraine, indefatigable in his ambitious dreams, were not slow to turn the former's military successes to political account, and hurried on the marriage of the Dauphin to the little Queen of Scots, by which they hoped to render their already immensely strong position altogether impregnable.

They had to encounter some opposition. The Queen pleaded the extreme youth and delicate health of her son, while Madame de Valentinois also wished to delay the marriage. The course of events during the last few months had caused that lady to reconsider her position very seriously. Until the summer of 1557, her policy of supporting the Guises against the Montmorency party had answered admirably. For the Constable, backed by the Princes of the Blood and the great majority of the nobility, and enjoying the affection and confidence of the King, was still too strong for the Guises; and Diane's assistance was therefore indispensable to the latter. Thus, she had established the equilibrium between the contending factions and dominated the situation.

But Saint-Quentin and Calais had changed all that. The Constable was a prisoner, his party discredited; while the praises of the Guises were in every mouth. Her former *protégés* now considered themselves strong enough to dispense with her support; they no longer consulted her; they no longer treated her with their customary deference. Diane, indignant at their ingratitude, resolved to show them their mistake and to restore the equilibrium by an alliance with the captive Constable. However, neither she nor the Queen was able to delay the marriage; for Henri II not only felt himself under great obligations to the Guises, but "he desired

to avail himself more surely of the forces of Scotland against England next year.”¹

On April 19, 1558, the betrothal took place in the great hall of the new Louvre, when the bridegroom of fourteen and the bride of fifteen plighted their troth and exchanged a ring; and on the following Sunday (April 24), the marriage was celebrated at Notre-Dame with a magnificence which must have entailed very serious inroads on a loan of 3,000,000 écus, which, in the flush of their enthusiasm over the taking of Calais, an assembly of the Notables had recently voted “for the service of the country.” The festivities lasted for several days, and were considered “the most regal and triumphant that had been witnessed in the kingdom for many years.”

¹ Despatch of Soranzo, Venetian Ambassador at the Court of France, to the Senate, cited by Armand Baschet, *Diplomatie Vénitienne*.

CHAPTER XIV

Unbearable arrogance of the Guises—Secret interview between the Cardinal de Lorraine and the Bishop of Arras (afterwards Cardinal de Granvelle) at Marcoing—Denunciation of the heresy of Andelot by the cardinal—Henri II, irritated by the insolence of the Guises, desires peace and the release of the Constable—His letters to Montmorency—The Duc de Guise continues his military successes—Treaty of Cateau-Cambrésis—Indignation in France—The Guises prepare to assume a new rôle—Progress of the Reformation in France—Henri II resolves on the extermination of heresy—Disinclination of the Parliament of Paris to co-operate with the Government in the persecution—The King attends the *mercuriale* of June 10, 1559—Bold attitude of the Counsellors Anne du Bourg and Louis du Faur—Fate of Du Bourg—The Treaty marriages—The tournament of the Rue Saint-Antoine—Fatal accident to the King—His death.

THE marriage of the Dauphin and Mary Stuart was an even greater triumph for the Guises than was generally believed, for at Fontainebleau, on April 4, fifteen days before the signing of the marriage-contract—in which the Queen and her young husband had sworn to maintain the laws, independence, and liberties of Scotland—they had persuaded her to sign a secret treaty, by which she transferred to the King of France, in the event of her death without children, the Kingdom of Scotland and all rights to the Crown of England, until a million gold crowns had been paid him, as an indemnity for the sum expended by France in the defence of the country. How far Mary was culpable is a point which has been much debated; but the probability is that she signed the documents which were laid before her without fully realising their importance.

For the moment, the Guises appeared all-powerful; but their success rendered them unbearably arrogant, and they abused the credit which they enjoyed. At the royal wedding the duke had discharged the captive

Montmorency's important functions of Grand Master of the King's Household. Taking advantage of the right which these functions gave him to arrange the whole ceremonial, he caused his nephew, the young Duke of Lorraine, and his brother, the Duc d'Aumale, to take precedence over all the princes of the House of Bourbon, save the eldest Antoine, who, two years before, had become King of Navarre, by the death of his father-in-law, Henri d'Albret. Thus, in this pageant, which gave to the heir to the throne of France a foreign crown, all the honours seemed to appertain to foreign princes.

At this period, distinctions of rank were deemed of such importance that not to enjoy the precedence to which one was entitled was a dishonour. But, in disputing the *pas* with the Bourbons, the Guises were actuated by a more practical motive than the desire of gratifying their family pride. They were seeking gradually to propagate the idea that they were the real pillars of the throne, the highest in rank in the kingdom, and that, if the House of Valois should become extinct, they, and not the descendants of Saint-Louis, ought to replace them.

Not content with the slight which he had inflicted upon the Bourbon princes, the Duc de Guise next endeavoured to humiliate and despoil the captive Constable. He had long coveted the large emuloments, and, still more, the immense patronage, which the exalted office of Grand Master carried with it, and his vicarious importance on the occasion of the royal wedding had so flattered his vanity that, shortly afterwards, he begged the King to confer the post upon him definitely, as the reward of his military services. Henri II, dissembling with difficulty his indignation at being asked to despoil his oldest friend—at a moment, too, when the latter was suffering for his devotion to his master's service—declined; whereupon Guise asked for the reversion of the post, which, as he was probably well aware, his Majesty had already accorded to his son-

in-law, François de Montmorency. This was also refused.

An incident which occurred a little later served to increase the King's irritation against the Guises.

In May 1558, the Cardinal de Lorraine had accompanied to Péronne the young Duke of Lorraine, who was being brought up at the French Court, on a visit which that prince was paying to his mother, the Duchess Christina. The duchess, who was a cousin of Philip II, had espoused the cause of Spain, in the hope that, since she was on one side and her son on the other, they might contrive between them to preserve the independence of the duchy. In this they had hitherto been successful, but they had not been able to save the country from being mercilessly pillaged by the light cavalry of either army. Unless, indeed, peace were soon made, the unhappy peasants would be completely ruined; and, to endeavour to hasten it, the Duchess arranged a secret interview at Marcoing, between the Cardinal de Lorraine and Antoine Perronet de Granvelle, Bishop of Arras, soon to become famous under the name of the Cardinal de Granvelle.

In this interview, the crafty bishop, who was well aware of the vain and ambitious character of the man with whom he had to deal, assured the cardinal that the King of Spain considered that he and his brother held in their hands the destiny of France and of Europe. No one could deplore more than his Majesty the continuance of this ruinous and unnatural war between the two great Catholic nations of Europe, at a time when both were threatened by a common enemy. While they were squandering their resources and exhausting their energies in sterile conflict, the canker of heresy was spreading its roots far and wide, menacing with destruction both Church and State. It was their imperative duty to conclude peace at the earliest possible moment, in order that the two monarchs might unite in a determined effort to extirpate heresy in their

respective dominions. His Catholic Majesty, he added, believed that he could count upon the Cardinal de Lorraine and the Duc de Guise, whose zeal for the Church was so well known, and who possessed such immense influence in France, to do all in their power to further this great object.

The cardinal listened and was visibly impressed. A sceptic at heart, he cared not a jot about the schism which was rending Christendom, except in so far as the progress of the Reformed doctrines might endanger his own ecclesiastical revenues. But the bishop's words had suggested to his restless and ambitious mind a new line of action, a new means for the aggrandizement of himself and his relations. Hitherto the Guises had blended their fortunes with those of France. It was in defending their adopted country against its foreign enemies that they had built up the greatness of their House and accumulated dignities and revenues. But now he perceived that the time had arrived when their horizon might well widen. In declaring themselves the champions of the Catholic cause in France, they would cease to be parvenu foreigners, to become the defenders of the Faith. Their *rôle* would appear to be an infinitely more important one, since they would no longer be protecting the private interests of their family, but the rights of all Catholics; their partisans would no longer be simple gentlemen attached to the fortunes of a general, but all those whose religious beliefs were assailed, whose property was menaced, be they peasants or prelates, shopkeepers or foreign princes. They would no longer be at the mercy of the intrigues of the Court; they would no longer have to defend themselves against the Bourbons or the Montmorencies, or to seek the protection of a favourite; their cause would become that of the Faith; they would be regarded as the chiefs of orthodoxy in Europe, and all resistance to their power would appear an attack upon religion.

Thus was then laid the foundation of that vast scheme

which time was to complete, of that crusade against the Reformers in France and the Netherlands, in the course of which the Guises, blinded by ambition, were to sacrifice without compunction the interests of their country at the bidding of a foreign despot, and to do all in their power to make France a mere dependency of Spain.

When Granvelle observed the effect which his words had produced upon the cardinal, he offered to give him proof of the extent to which heresy was making progress amongst the greatest families of France. He then placed in his hands a letter written by Andelot, who had succeeded, thanks to his knowledge of Spanish, in effecting his escape a few days after the taking of Saint-Quentin, to his brother Coligny, and had been intercepted, which showed that the writer had embraced the Reformed faith, at the same time giving him permission to make what use of it he saw fit.

The Cardinal de Lorraine did not fail to profit by an opportunity which permitted him to strike at the nephew of the Constable, and, on his return from Marcoing, he immediately denounced the heresy of Andelot to the King, who sent for the new convert and questioned him on the matter. Andelot courageously admitted the truth of the accusation, upon which Henri II, irritated by this audacity, caused him to be imprisoned at Meaux, and afterwards at Melun, and deprived him of his post of Colonel-General of Infantry, which he gave to Montluc, though the latter, from fear of the Constable, hesitated at first to accept it.¹ The King was, however, far more angry with the cardinal,

¹ The Pope, when informed of the matter, blamed the Cardinal de Lorraine for not having taken advantage of his office of Grand Inquisitor to have the heretical Andelot burned at the stake. The French Ambassador to the Vatican, Babou, Bishop of Angoulême, represented to Paul IV that one could scarcely burn the nephew of a general who had been wounded and made prisoner in the course of a war undertaken in the interests of the Holy See. The ungrateful old Pontiff continued to grumble. "He ought to burn all the same," he kept on repeating; "he ought to burn all the same."

who, under the pretext of religious zeal, had obliged him to disgrace a near relative of Montmorency.

Soon Henri II, chafing beneath the insolence of the Guises, and yet fearful of offending them, since the political abilities of the cardinal were as necessary to him in the present crisis as were the military talents of the duke, began to long for peace and the release of Montmorency. Madame de Valentinois did everything in her power to stimulate this desire, for the return of the Constable could alone re-establish the equilibrium between the rival factions on which her own importance so largely depended; and, as a proof of her friendly intentions towards Montmorency, she arranged a marriage between her daughter, Gabrielle de la Marck, and his second son, Henri de Montmorency, Baron de Damville. At her instigation, the Duc de Nevers, a friend of the Montmorencies, placed himself at the head of the Constable's party, which found a supporter in the Queen, whom the arrogance of the Guises had also offended. As for the King, he wrote letter after letter to the Constable, urging him to fix his ransom and pave the way for peace. "I shall die happy," he writes, in the hyperbolical style of the time, "if I can see a good peace and the man whom I love and esteem more than any other in the world. And, since this is so, do not fear to fix your ransom at any price, however high." And again: "Do what you can to procure us peace. . . . The greatest pleasure that I can have is to have a good peace and to see you at liberty."¹ The King's orders coincided too closely with the Constable's own interests for him to neglect them, and from the month of July several unofficial *pourparlers* took place between him and his fellow-prisoner, on the one side, and the ministers and generals of Philip II in the Netherlands, on the other.

Meantime, the war continued with varying fortune, such advantages as the French gained being wholly due

¹ F. Decrue, *Anne, Duc de Montmorency*.

to Guise. While the Maréchal de Termes, the newly-appointed Governor of Calais, who had been ravaging the Flemish coast, sustained a crushing defeat at Grave-lines (July 11), Guise, operating on the Moselle, took Thionville (June 22), which the enemy had reckoned impregnable, and, a few days later, Arlon, in Luxembourg.

Both Henri II and Philip II were by this time feverishly anxious for peace. The conquests of the former had been counterbalanced by the victories of the latter; the Pope, the author of their quarrel, had withdrawn from the fray; they were anxious to have their hands free to deal with the religious question in France and the Netherlands; Henri II ardently desired the return of the Constable to free him from the despotism of the Guises; while Philip was in desperate financial straits.

And so a suspension of arms was agreed upon, and was followed, in the middle of October, by a congress at the Abbey of Cercamp, in the Cambrésis, under the mediation of the Duchess-dowager of Lorraine, the two distinguished prisoners, released on parole, being among the French plenipotentiaries. Although neither France nor Spain could boast any very decisive advantage over the other, the Spanish representatives, aware of the private interests involved on the French side, insisted on the evacuation of Savoy and Piedmont, which were to be given back to Emmanuel Philibert, the restoration of all other conquests made by France in Italy, and the renunciation of Henri II's claims to the Milanese and Naples. And to these demands they continued to adhere, even after the death of Mary (November 16, 1558), and Elizabeth's refusal of Philip II's hand, had deprived Spain of all hope of English assistance in the event of the negotiations being broken off.

Nevertheless, the Spaniards had not the remotest intention of provoking a renewal of hostilities, for their resources were so exhausted that to continue the war was absolutely out of the question; and, even while his

plenipotentiaries were arrogantly pressing their demands, and threatening a recourse to arms unless they were conceded, Philip II was writing to Granvelle as follows :—

“ I have already expended one million two hundred thousand ducats that I have drawn from Spain. . . . I shall have need of another million from here next March. Spain can do nothing further for me. It appears to me that I must come to an arrangement of some kind, or I am lost. . . . On no account are the negotiations to be broken off.”¹

However, thanks to the feverish impatience of Henri II for the release of the Constable and his mistress's jealousy of the Guises, the Spaniards obtained nearly all they demanded ; and on April 3, 1559, at Cateau-Cambrésis, whither the negotiations had been transferred at the beginning of February, France “ surrendered by a single stroke of the pen all the Italian conquests of thirty years,”² with the exception of the little marquisate of Saluzzo—in all, close upon two hundred towns and fortresses—and covered this surrender under the form of dowry to the French princesses who were to be the pledges of future amity. Savoy and Piedmont were given back to Emmanuel Philibert, Duke of Savoy, who was to espouse Madame Marguerite, Henri II's youngest sister ; the conquests in the Milanese were offered to Philip II, if he consented to espouse the King's eldest daughter, Madame Élisabeth, and Granvelle wrote in reply that his master “ was resolved, in order to show his real and sincere affection, to condescend frankly to the proposal.” Finally, the young Duke of Lorraine, who had married Madame Claude in January 1559, was to receive with her Stenay and 300,000 écus, by way of dowry, and France to evacuate the duchy. The two monarchs were to restore reciprocally their conquests in the Netherlands and Picardy.

¹ *Papiers d'État de Granvelle*, vol. v.

² Pasquier, *Lettres inédites*.

The question of the restitution of the Three Bishoprics was reserved, which meant that, though France's right to them was not formally acknowledged, she was to be left in peaceable possession. The thorny question of Calais, much simplified by the demise of Mary and her successor's refusal of Philip's hand, was settled by a separate peace between England and France, signed on the preceding day. Calais and the adjoining fortresses were to be left in the hands of France, to be restored in eight years. If they were not restored, France was to pay the sum of 500,000 écus.¹ Peace between England and Scotland was made on the same day.²

When the terms of the Treaty of Cateau-Cambrésis were made known in France there was a violent outcry against it, which grew louder as the return of the French garrisons from Piedmont, Savoy, Luxembourg, and Flanders enabled the nation to realise the magnitude of the surrender. The Duc de Guise, exasperated by the obstinacy of the King, told him roughly that he had lost more in a single day than thirty years of continuous reverses could have wrested from him, and his opinion was shared by the whole army, even by those who, like Brissac and Vieilleville, disliked the duke heartily. The treaty was named the "Prisoners' Peace," and the enemies of Montmorency accused him of having sacrificed the interests of the King of France to his desire of recovering his liberty.³ The Constable, however, did not altogether deserve these reproaches. In consenting to the Spanish demands, he was merely the too complaisant agent of the King, whose dread of the

¹ *Papiers d'État de Granvelle*, vol. v.

² The treaty, however, contained a stipulation that if, in the meantime, England committed any aggression against either France or Scotland, she forfeited all right to restitution or recompense.

³ It was also asserted that the Duke of Savoy, to whom he had surrendered at Saint-Quentin, had accepted a nominal ransom in consideration of the territorial concessions which his captive had procured for him. The Duke of Savoy did certainly reduce the ransom from 300,000 écus, the price which he had at first demanded, to 200,000 écus; but even that was an enormous sum. Therefore, the Constable can scarcely be accused of having sold Savoy and Piedmont.

increasing power of the Guises was continually stimulated by Diane de Poitiers, until he had perhaps become more impatient for the release of Montmorency than was the prisoner himself.

"My friend," he writes to him, "I assure you that M. de Guyse does not desire peace, warning me that I have more means for continuing the war than I ever had, and that I shall not lose so much if I make war as I should if you came to an arrangement. . . . Do what you can to procure us peace; and do not show this letter to any one save the Maréchal de Saint-André, and burn it afterwards. The person whom I name in my letter [Guise] has said to some one here that, so long as the war lasts, not one of you will ever come out of prison. As for this, think of it as a matter which concerns you."¹

The Constable did think of it, and he must share with the King and Madame de Valentinois the responsibility for the treaty; but these two, and not Montmorency, were its principal authors.

Unsparingly denounced by all contemporary writers, and condemned in almost equally strong terms by modern historians, the Treaty of Cateau-Cambrésis has found an apologist in that very high authority on the sixteenth century, M. Alphonse de Ruble, who has consecrated to its defence an erudite monograph, in which he declares it to have been "the greatest benefit which Henri II left to his people."

His argument, in brief, is that Henri II retained almost all the useful conquests of his reign: Calais, Metz, Toul, and Verdun; while, by the renunciation of her Italian ambitions, France was a distinct gainer, for Italy, since the time of Charles VIII, had been a veritable quicksand, swallowing up French lives and treasure.²

There is a great deal of force in what M. de Ruble says, and there can be no doubt that Henri II has been

¹ Lavissee, *Histoire de France*.

² *Le Traité de Cateau-Cambrésis* (Paris, 1859)

hardly dealt with both by his contemporaries and historians in this matter. But the writer has overlooked the radical defect of the treaty: the abandonment, if not of Piedmont, at least of Savoy, Bresse, and Bugey, which retarded for more than a century the annexation of the Franche-Comté.¹

Further, M. de Ruble does not appear to us sufficiently to appreciate the moral effect of the treaty of which he has constituted himself the apologist. France made great concessions to Philip II, and the compensation which she received was not at the expense of Spain, but of England and the Emperor. In the eyes of Europe, she lost from that moment her claim to rank as the equal of Spain; and Philip II, although deprived of the Empire by his uncle, Ferdinand, and of England by the death of Mary Tudor, was regarded as the arbiter of European affairs.

With the return of peace—that peace which, as we have just seen, had been precipitated by the alarm inspired by the rapidly-increasing power of the Guises—the supple Lorraine princes immediately prepared to assume the new *rôle* which the Bishop of Arras had suggested to the Cardinal de Lorraine in that eventful interview at Marcoing, and in which the latter had foreseen such vast possibilities. But, before speaking of that, it will be as well for us to survey very briefly the progress of the Reformation in France.

Since the beginning of Henri II's reign several attempts had been made to check the progress of the Reformed doctrines. In 1548, the desire to secure the friendship of the Papacy had led to the establishment of a special chamber in the Parlement of Paris, called the "*Chambre ardente*," which exercised the powers entrusted to it so remorselessly, that when, towards the end of the following year, an edict remitted to the ecclesiastical judges the decision in trials for "simple heresy," it was

¹ M. Lemonnier, in Lavissee, *Histoire de France*.

regarded by the Protestants almost as an abatement of the severity with which they were being treated. In 1551, the Edict of Chateaubriand took away all right of appeal from those convicted of heresy; while six years later, urged on by the Cardinal de Lorraine and solicited by Paul IV, at the moment when the alliance with the Papacy against Philip II was being negotiated, Henri II resolved to establish in his kingdom an Inquisition on the Spanish model, and nominated three Grand Inquisitors—the Cardinals de Bourbon, de Lorraine, and de Châtillon—though the appointment of the last, who was a brother of Coligny and Andelot, and whose orthodoxy was already suspected, was merely a snare to entrap him. The Parlement, however, refused for some time to register the edict establishing the Inquisition, and, when they were at length compelled to yield, they rendered it more or less impotent, by continuing to receive appeals against the judgment of the ecclesiastical tribunals.

Meanwhile, however, the King had strengthened the lay jurisdiction and armed it pitilessly by the Edict of Compiègne, which denounced the penalty of death against all who in public or private professed any heterodox doctrine, and took away from the judges the power of imposing a lesser punishment. The prisons, and especially the prisons of Paris—the sombre, damp Conciergerie, below the level of the Seine, the frowning Bastille, the unhealthy Grand Châtelet, where in a single year sixty hapless captives were carried off by pestilence—were crowded with suspects. Numbers were condemned to death and perished horribly—hung in chains, as a rule, to roast over a slow fire, some having their tongues cut out before being led to execution, lest the psalms they sung and the prayers they offered up from the midst of the flames might excite the compassion of the spectators.

But the blood of the martyrs fertilised the soil of France, and the harvest was an abundant one. In 1555,

the Reformed Church of Paris was founded by a gentleman residing in the Pré-aux-Clercs, and during the next four years the Reformed churches, although most numerous on the banks of the Loire and in the south-western districts, spread over almost the whole country. In May 1557, the first national synod, composed of delegates from all the churches in France, was held in Paris, when a confession of faith was drawn up and the ecclesiastical discipline regulated on the model of Geneva. In 1558, Calvin computed the number of his followers in France at 300,000 ; other authorities place them at a much higher figure. Many thousands more had emigrated to Geneva and to more tolerant lands, so that "the King lost not only the souls of his subject, but the money which they carried away into the bargain."¹

If the lowly, as Coligny afterwards observed, had been the first to show the way to the rich and powerful, the upper classes had not failed to follow, though it must be admitted that not a few of the nobility espoused the Reformed faith from other motives than conviction. In 1558, as we have seen, Andelot had confessed to the King that he had embraced the new doctrines, and his views were either known or believed to be shared by his two brothers, the Admiral and the cardinal, by Antoine de Bourbon, King of Navarre, by his wife, Jeanne d'Albret, by the Prince de Condé, and many other prominent persons.

Fierce as had been the persecution since Henri II ascended the throne, it had not been by any means continuous, for the complaints of his allies, the Lutheran princes, and of the Protestant cantons of Switzerland, whence he drew his most valuable mercenaries, were constantly arresting the King in his crusade against heresy ; and there were moments, like those which followed the disaster of Saint-Quentin, when every man, whatever his creed, was needed for the defence

¹ F. Decrue, *Anne, Duc de Montmorency*.

of the country. But after the Treaty of Cateau-Cambrésis, his hands were free, and, in conformity with a secret understanding which he had entered into with Philip II, on the advice of the Cardinal de Lorraine, he was resolved that there should be no respite until the accursed thing was rooted out. The Constable and Madame de Valentinois were at one with the Guises in this matter, though Montmorency took care to protect his own relatives, and almost his first act on returning to France was to procure the release and pardon of Andelot.

All through Lent the pulpits of Paris resounded with denunciations of the heretics and of those who protected them, and soon the persecution was in full swing once more. But in the capital it did not proceed at all in accordance with the wishes of the Government. The Grande Chambre of the Parlement, from which the members of the "*Chambre ardente*" had been drawn, was composed of extreme Catholics, but the members of the other courts were more moderate in their views, while not a few of them were Huguenots, secret or professed. The Parlement had, as we have seen, courageously resisted the creation of the Inquisition, and the King had been obliged to have recourse to a Bed of Justice in order to procure its acceptance; and it now showed what his Majesty considered the most reprehensible leniency towards the heretics who were brought before it.

The Parlement was accustomed, all the chambers united, to deliberate occasionally on general measures, and to censure, if necessary, the conduct of its members. In one of these sittings, called *mercuriales*, in the spring of 1559, the subject of the prosecutions for heresy was discussed. The opinion of the majority was in favour of toleration, and the violence of the Grande Chambre was condemned by the other courts.

The King, informed of this, demanded to inspect the register of the *mercuriales*, in order that he might

ascertain who were the leaders of the party of toleration. This was refused, but the First-President, Le Maistre, and two Presidents of the Grande Chambre betrayed the liberal counsellors and gave their names to the Cardinal de Lorraine.

The cardinal exhorted Henri II "to prove to the King of Spain his firmness in the faith," and it was decided to teach the Parlement a severe lesson.

On June 10, 1559, all the chambers of the Parlement were assembled at the Couvent des Grands-Augustins—the Palais de Justice was being prepared for the festivities which were to celebrate the Treaty marriages—when the doors were thrown open, and the King appeared, followed by the Cardinal de Lorraine, the Duc de Guise, the Cardinal de Sens, Keeper of the Seals, the Duc de Montpensier, the Prince de la Roche-sur-Yon, and many other notables. The English Ambassador, Nicolas Throckmorton, writing to Queen Elizabeth three days later, reported that there were 120 counsellors and presidents present, and that "the Cardinal de Lorraine earnestly inveighed against the Protestants, requesting execution to be made of them and confiscation of their goods."¹ But La Place states that the King himself spoke first, informing the magistrates that, since God had granted him a stable peace, he felt it his duty to seek a remedy for the divisions of religion; and that the Keeper of the Seals then invited them to continue their discussion of the religious question in his Majesty's presence, and to speak frankly.²

The magistrates spoke very frankly indeed, two of them, Anne du Bourg, and Louis du Faur, being unpleasantly candid. "Du Bourg," writes Throckmorton, "declared that the cardinals of this realm had great revenues, and were so negligent of their charge that the flocks committed to their cures were not instructed. The cardinal [de Lorraine] was so dashed that he stood

¹ *State Papers, Elizabeth* (Foreign Series).

² *De l'estat de la religion et république.*

still and replied not; the King likewise was offended, and the Constable (with these words: '*Vous faictes la bravade*'), asked them how they durst say so to the King. They answered that, being admitted Counsellors to the Court, they must discharge their conscience, the rather as the King was present; that the Reformation must not begin with the common sort, but must touch the greatest persons of the realm."

According to La Place, the two counsellors went much further than this. Anne du Bourg began by thanking God that his Majesty was present at the decision of a matter which concerned the cause of our Saviour. "It is," he continued, "no light thing to condemn those who from the midst of the flames call upon the name of Jesus Christ. What! Crimes worthy of death—blasphemy, adultery, horrible debaucheries, perjuries—are committed day by day with impunity in the face of Heaven, while day by day new tortures are devised for men whose only crime is that by the light of the Scriptures they have discovered the corruptions of the Church of Rome!" "Let us clearly understand," cried Du Faur, after a trenchant attack on the abuses of the Roman Church, "who they are that trouble the Church, lest it should be said, as Elijah cried to King Ahab, 'Who art thou that troublest Israel?'"

Henri II was beside himself with indignation, and, so soon as the discussion terminated, he ordered Du Bourg and Du Faur to be arrested and conducted to the Bastille. Three other counsellors, who had also spoken against the persecution, though with more moderation than their colleagues, were subsequently arrested in their houses and likewise imprisoned. They and Du Faur were, however, soon released; but the King was violently incensed against Du Bourg, who had hinted pretty plainly at his relations with Madame de Valentinois, and ordered him to be brought to trial, vowing that he would see him burn with his own eyes. From Écouen, whither he proceeded on a visit to the Constable,

he launched a new edict against the Protestants, and, at the instigation of the Guises, even issued orders for the arrest of the Earl of Arran, son of the Duke of Châtellerault-Hamilton, although he passed as a candidate for the hand of the Queen of England. Having received timely warning, however, Arran succeeded in escaping from France.

The trial of Anne du Bourg lasted some time, and at one moment he appeared to waver and to be inclined to renounce his faith. But, as he was returning from the court to his prison, he perceived at one of the windows a certain Madame Lecaille, a fellow-prisoner awaiting her trial on a similar charge, who reproached him with his hesitations. Recalled to firmness by the voice of this woman, he refused to sign the recantation, and on December 23, 1559, having been first strangled, he was burned in the Place de Grève, exclaiming with his last breath: "Forsake me not, my God, lest I should forsake Thee!" Henri II, however, did not have the satisfaction of witnessing his martyrdom, since he had preceded him into Eternity by more than five months.

The marriage of Philip II and Madame Élisabeth had been fixed for July 22, 1559; that of Emmanuel Philibert of Savoy and Madame Marguerite for the first of the following month. On June 16, Alva, who was to act as proxy for his Sovereign, arrived in Paris, accompanied by William of Nassau, Prince of Orange, the future liberator of the Netherlands, and a brilliant suite, and met with a magnificent reception. Fête succeeded fête, and every day there were tournaments and jousts, in which the princes distinguished themselves. The Court was lodged at the Hôtel des Tournelles, and it was in front of the palace, in the widest part of the Rue Saint-Antoine, which had been unpaved for the occasion, that the lists had been constructed, with galleries at either end for the accommodation of the spectators.

On the 21st, the betrothal of Philip II and Madame

Élisabeth took place in the great hall of the Louvre, and on the following day the nuptial ceremony was performed at Notre-Dame with a magnificence similar to that which had marked the marriage of the Dauphin to Mary Stuart the previous year.

After the marriage of Madame Élisabeth, the Court occupied itself with that of her aunt, Madame Marguerite. The Duke of Savoy arrived on the 21st, accompanied by 150 gentlemen "dressed in doublets of red satin, crimson shoes and cloaks of black velvet embroidered with gold lace." The contract was signed on the 27th, and was followed by a three days' tournament—the last which was ever to be held at the Court of France.

On the third day, the 30th, the King himself entered the lists accompanied by the Duc de Guise, Alphonse d'Este, Prince of Ferrara, and the Duc de Nemours, who announced that they were prepared to hold them against all comers. Henri II wore the colours of Diane de Poitiers—black and white—and rode a horse belonging to the Duke of Savoy, who did not himself take any part in the tournament, but watched the proceedings from the gallery in which the Queen, his bride-elect, and the ladies of the Court were sitting.

After running several successful courses, the King sent a gentleman to the Duke of Savoy to compliment him on the excellence of the horse he had lent him, which, he declared, had greatly contributed to his success. The Duke replied that he was very delighted that his horse had been of service to the King, and begged him, as did the Queen and the ladies who were with her, not to exert himself further that day, "as the victory was his, the hour late, the weather extremely hot, and the tournament concluded."

"The gentleman departed to convey this message to the King, whom he found ready to run another course, and who had made them give him a fresh lance, although several princes, particularly he of Ferrara,

begged him to joust no more that day.¹ But his hour was come, and the more they entreated him, the more obstinate did he become, swearing on the faith of a gentleman that he would break this one lance more. Then he commanded the Captain Lorges to come to him, a very valiant young nobleman, captain of the Scottish Guard,² and when the latter approached ordered him to run against him. The gentleman excused himself, and begged the King not to command him. His Majesty became angry, and to such a degree that Lorges turned his bridle, took a lance, and tilted against the King. He struck the King on the gorget a little below the visor,³ into which a splinter entered and wounded the King above the right eye. So heavy and furious was the blow that the King inclined his head towards the lists, striving to recover his seat; turned towards the other side of the lists, and would have fallen, had not the princes and gentlemen who were near him, on foot and on horseback, come to his aid. They relieved him of his armour and found him fainting, the splinter in his eye, and his face covered with blood. They strove to revive him with fresh water, rosewater and vinegar, but, though he recovered consciousness, before ever he got to his chamber he fainted twice. The unhappy young Seigneur de Lorges, though he was as much wounded in his soul, by reason of the anguish which he suffered, as was the King in

¹ The anxiety to induce Henri II to leave the lists had probably nothing to do with the sinister dreams and presentiments of which so many writers speak, but was due to the fact that the King, when he over-exerted himself, was subject to attacks of vertigo, and had had a severe one not long before, after playing tennis.

² Gabriel de Montgomery, Seigneur de Lorges. He was the son of Jacques, Comte de Montgomery, a veteran of the wars of Louis XII, and was at this time about twenty-eight years old. His father had preceded him in the command of the Scottish Guard, and still held the title, though Gabriel, who had been promised the reversion of the post, fulfilled all the duties. The Montgomerys were, of course, of Scottish origin, and traced their descent from the lairds of Ardrossan.

³ According to the *Mémoires de Tavannes*, the King had lowered his visor, but, in his eagerness to engage Montgomery had not stopped to fasten it.

his body, because of his wound, when the King had recovered his senses for the first time, hastened to kneel before him, and, without making any excuse or imputing the guilt of this to the command of his Majesty, besought him to cut off his hand or his head. But the good-natured King, who for kindness had no equal in his time, answered kindly that he was not angry with him, and that he had nothing to pardon, since he had obeyed his King and carried himself like a brave knight and a valiant man-at-arms.”¹

The wounded monarch was carried into the Hôtel de Tournelles, and the Court surgeons were speedily in attendance. Their first impression was that the injury was confined to the eye, but it soon became evident that the brain was also affected. The celebrated André Vesale, surgeon to Philip II, who had been despatched in all haste from Brussels by his royal master, arrived and took charge of the case, of which he subsequently wrote a learned relation in Latin. It was, however, altogether beyond the skill of the surgery of the sixteenth century, and, after lingering for some days, Henri died at one o'clock in the afternoon of July 9. He was in the forty-first year of his age and the thirteenth of his reign.

¹ Letter of Antoine Caraccioli, Bishop of Troyes, to Corneille Musse, Bishop of Bitonto.

CHAPTER XV

Accession of François II—The Guises take possession of the person of the young King and usurp all authority—Disgrace of Madame de Valentinois—Futile overtures of the Constable to Antoine de Bourbon, King of Navarre—Fall of Montmorency—His interview with Catherine de' Medici—Insolence of the Guises to the King of Navarre—Coronation of the King—Montmorency is compelled to resign the Grand Mastership, which is conferred upon the Duc de Guise—Coligny is tricked out of the government of Picardy and all persons in authority hostile to the new régime are removed.

NICHOLAS THROCKMORTON, writing to Elizabeth on the evening of the day on which Henri II had received his fatal wound, informs his royal mistress that "there was mervailous great lamentation made for him [the King], and weeping of all sorts, both men and women." It almost seemed as though the French had foreseen that, with the death of their Sovereign, was to begin that terrible epoch in which blind fanaticism, exploited by selfish and perverse ambitions, would surpass the ferocity of the Armagnacs and the Bourguignons, and renew the horrors and calamities of the English wars.

The new King, François II, was a frail, sickly lad, who had but half completed his sixteenth year. In the summer of 1547, when he was three years old, he had had an attack of small-pox, from which he had made a very slow recovery, and for the rest of his short life the poor boy never seems to have known what it was to be really well. In appearance, he was short and very slight, "with features which resembled the physiognomy of his mother rather than his father's." Indolent and easily led, he was as submissive as a slave to his beautiful and intelligent young wife, to whom he was passionately devoted; while Mary Stuart, in her turn, was entirely governed by her ambitious and unscrupulous uncles.

Thus, the Guises had attained, far sooner than they had dared to hope, the object of this marriage so skilfully calculated. Fate continued to fight for them; Henri II, like his father, had disappeared from the scene at the moment when, after having imprudently aggrandized them, he had at length perceived the error he had committed.

Certain of the docility of the young King, little apprehensive of the influence which the Queen-mother, Catherine de' Medici, might be able to exercise, since the laws of etiquette obliged her to remain shut up in her chamber for forty days, with closed windows and walls draped with black, the Guises lost not a moment in taking steps to make themselves masters of the kingdom. Before Henri II had breathed his last the Duc de Guise had introduced into Paris several hundred of his partisans, armed to the teeth, and had even stationed some of them in the Dauphin's apartments at the Hôtel des Tournelles, having induced the young prince to believe that some danger threatened him, and that his uncles had deemed it advisable to take precautionary measures. On the morrow, the duke surrounded himself with a strong body of men-at-arms and escorted the new King to the Louvre, "leaving the body of the deceased to those who had possessed his mind,"¹ and the Constable occupied with the supervision of the long ceremonies of the late King's obsequies. On arriving at the Louvre, he at once proceeded to take possession of the apartments of Madame de Valentinois; while the Cardinal de Lorraine installed himself in those of Montmorency.

Montmorency, who had always found in the royal favour the most solid basis of his power, could, in this crisis in his fortunes, reckon neither on the King nor on the Queen-mother. Regarding the marriage of Henri II and Catherine de' Medici as a *mésalliance*, he passed for having counselled his master to repudiate her in the time of François I; and he was also accused of having

¹ *Mémoires de Tavannes.*

told the late King that the only one of his children who resembled him was his natural daughter, Diane de France, wife of François de Montmorency. In making this very unfortunate observation, it is probable that the Constable had thought less of offending the Queen than of flattering his daughter-in-law, but, however that may be, it had been bitterly resented by Catherine, who had a further grievance against him in the support he had given Diane de Poitiers in the early days of that lady's favour. Some writers assert that the Constable did make some tentative overtures to the Queen-mother, in the hope of convincing her of the solidarity of their interests at this juncture; but, if this be true, he must very quickly have recognised that he could hope for no assistance from that quarter. Even had Catherine been well disposed towards Montmorency, it is very improbable that, seeing the balance inclining so decisively in favour of the Lorraine princes, she would have attempted any opposition to them. Eager as she was for power and influence, she was shrewd enough to perceive that her hour was not yet come; that the reign of Diane de Poitiers was giving way to that of Mary Stuart; that the King's mother would contend in vain against the King's wife, and that, for the present, it behoved her to accept the situation with the best grace she could, reserving herself for the chances of the future.

On their side, the Guises appeared anxious to conciliate Catherine, and made no difficulty in sacrificing to the vengeance of the outraged wife the Duchesse de Valentinois, notwithstanding that she was the mother-in-law of one of them, the Duc d'Aumale. If we are to believe Brantôme, Diane received orders to retire from Court and to restore the Crown jewels which her royal lover had given her even before the breath had left Henri II's body. "What! Is the King dead?" inquired she of the gentleman who brought them. "No, Madame," was the answer, "but he can only linger a little longer." "So long as an inch of life remains to

him," rejoined the lady haughtily, "I desire my enemies to know that I fear them not, and that, so long as he is alive, I shall not obey them. But, when he is dead, I do not wish to survive him, and all the bitterness which they may be able to inflict upon me will be only sweets in comparison with my loss. And so, whether my King be alive or dead, I do not fear my enemies." She remained alone in her apartments, abandoned by all, in the midst of that Court peopled by her creatures, until July 11—two days after the death of the King—when she took her departure. The vengeance of Catherine did not, as a matter of fact, go very far, since it was limited by the interests of the Guises, who naturally desired to safeguard Diane's property, part of which would revert to their House; and the only humiliation which she inflicted upon her fallen rival consisted in exacting the restoration of the Crown jewels¹ and the surrender of the Château of Chenonceaux, in exchange for that of Chaumont-sur-Loire, which her Majesty purchased from the Barbezieux family for 120,000 livres.

But, if Chenonceaux were lost to her, Diane possessed, in her château of Anet, an even more sumptuous residence, and, though such enormous sums from the Royal Treasury had gone to its construction and embellishment that it might almost be considered Crown property, it stood, fortunately for its owner, upon land which had belonged to the Brézé family for generations; and so Catherine was unable to lay claim to it. To her beautiful Norman home—"the paradise of Anet," as the poet Joachim du Bellay styles it—the fallen favourite retired to spend the brief remainder of her life in complete retirement. Little is known of her last years, except that, like several of her predecessors and successors in the favour of kings,

¹ "The King (François II) has sent to inform Madame de Valentinois that because of her evil influence (*mali officii*) with the King, his father, she merited a severe punishment; but that, in his royal clemency, he did not wish to disquiet her further. Nevertheless, she must restore all the jewels which the King, his father, had given her."—Despatch of Giovanni Michieli, July 12, 1559, in Armand Baschet, *la Diplomatie Vénitienne*.

she appears to have been extremely generous to the poor. She died on April 24, 1566, in her sixty-seventh year, and was honoured by a magnificent funeral, all the gentry of the neighbourhood gathering to pay a last tribute of respect to the woman who for twelve years had been the virtual Queen of France. Brantôme, who saw her a few months before her death, assures us that she was then "*aussi belle, aussi fraîche, aussi aimable comme en l'âge de trente ans*"; but we fear that the chronicler's desire to please the duchess's daughter, to whom he very probably submitted this part of his manuscript, may have prevailed over his regard for the truth.

By her will, Diane's immense estates were divided between her two daughters; Anet falling to the share of the Duchesse d'Aumale; Chaumont to that of the Duchesse de Bouillon. Large sums were left to various charitable institutions, including several homes for repentant women.

Since he could look for no support from the Queen-mother, Montmorency's only hope of making head against the Guises lay in an alliance with Antoine de Bourbon, King of Navarre, who, after the four young sons of Henri II, stood next in succession to the throne. A few hours after the tragic termination of the tournament in the Rue Saint-Antoine, the Constable had despatched one of his gentlemen to the King of Navarre, who was then at Pau, entreating him to repair with all possible speed to Paris and claim his rights as first Prince of the Blood. The messenger, travelling night and day, compassed the long journey so rapidly that, had Antoine been disposed to respond to Montmorency's summons, he would have had time to reach Paris before Henri II expired, when, with the aid of the Constable and his relatives and partisans, he might have prevented the Guises from taking possession of the person of the new King.

Antoine, however, was not the kind of man to be

depended upon in a crisis of this nature. Although brave to the verge of rashness in battle, he was vain, irresolute, and unstable, constantly deceived by ambitious dreams, and doomed to be the dupe of adroit politicians. He had been long exploited by the agents of Philip of Spain, who beguiled him with the chimerical hope of the restoration of Spanish Navarre, which had been wrested from the House of Albret forty years before. Disillusioned by the Treaty of Cateau-Cambrésis, in which his claims had not even been mentioned, he had conceived a violent irritation against the Constable, by whom he considered his interests had been deliberately ignored during the negotiations. This most palpable bait, in fact, did not cease to deceive him during the remainder of his life, and was the dominant motive of all his actions, and he continued to persist in the delusion that Philip II, so ambitious for the extension of his monarchy, might be persuaded to detach from the Spanish peninsula a province of the first military importance, or to accord him handsome compensation in some other portion of his dominions.

Still smarting from his disappointment, he declined to join hands with the Constable; and his wife the courageous and energetic Jeanne d'Albret, besought him in vain to set out for Paris and protect the interests of his House against the ambition of the Guises. He preferred to await events, affecting to believe that the Constable had exaggerated the danger of the King, in order that he might cause his motive in hastening to the Court to be misconstrued; and it was not until the news of Henri II's death reached him that he quitted Pau.

The Guises did not fail to profit by the absence of the first Prince of the Blood, the only personage whose rank would have authorised him to oppose their usurpation of the government. Before the King of Navarre reached the Court, all authority was in their hands.

On July 10, deputies from the Parlement of Paris

proceeded to the Louvre to felicitate François II on his accession and "to inquire to whom it was his pleasure that they should henceforth address themselves in order to ascertain his will." The King replied that he had given "the charge of all things to his two uncles," the duke and the cardinal. The same day, the Secretary of State l'Aubespine, was despatched to Montmorency's hôtel, the Hôtel Meigret, not far from the Tournelles, where the Constable was staying, to demand the surrender of the Privy Seal, which, while the Great Seal remained in the hands of the Chancellor or the Keeper of the Seals, was usually confided to the most important personage in the kingdom. On the 18th, after depositing the heart of the late King at the Couvent des Celestins, in a beautiful urn supported by three Graces, which Germain Pilsen had made for its reception, the Constable, accompanied by his sons, his nephew, the Châtillons, and a considerable escort of gentlemen, repaired to Saint-Germain-en-Laye, whither the Court had now removed, to deliver up the Privy Seal to François II. The young King received him very courteously and confirmed him in the possession of his estates and titles; but, repeating the words which the Guises had dictated to him, added that, having regard to the great age of the Constable, he had decided to confide the command of his armies to the Duc de Guise, and the charge of his finances to the Cardinal de Lorraine. He would, however, willingly reserve a place in the Council for his father's trusted friend, whenever his age permitted him to assist at its deliberations, though, he feared, that would be but seldom.

Montmorency replied that he would not abuse this honour, and, having assured his Majesty that, if need should arise, he would find that he still possessed sufficient strength and intelligence to discharge his military duties and to carry arms in his service, he retired.

On leaving the royal presence, the Constable, very crestfallen, proceeded to the apartments of the Queen-



CHARLES, CARDINAL DE LORRAINE.

From a contemporary engraving.

mother. He took the liberty of counselling Catherine to inculcate in the King good principles, and, what was more, liberal principles of government. It was necessary, he declared, to take care not to allow this young prince to be prejudiced against his subjects. He ought to rule in conformity with the wishes of the nobility and of the other Estates of the realm, to deprive no one of his property or of his offices without due cause, and to remember, though the people willingly obeyed their own princes, they suffered with impatience the domination of foreigners.

This last observation, which was aimed at the Guises, was regarded by Catherine as having a personal application, and in her reply she could not refrain from alluding to the malicious remarks which Montmorency was credited with having let fall in regard to herself. The Constable hastened to disavow them, and, as he assured her of his devotion, the conversation terminated amicably enough, the Queen-mother promising to bear in mind the advice which he had considered it his duty to offer her. Nevertheless, Montmorency had little hope that the programme which he had just recommended would be adhered to; however much Catherine might approve of it, the Guises would be too strong for her. As for himself, all share in the government was denied to him, save the right of assisting at the Council, and, conscious that, for the moment, it would be advisable to bow before the storm, so soon as the remains of Henri II had been conveyed to Saint-Denis, he quitted the Court and retired to his château of Écouen.

Meanwhile, the King of Navarre had reached Saint-Germain. On his journey from Béarn, he had received innumerable offers of service from the provincial nobility, but on his arrival at the Court he experienced nothing but affronts. No one came to meet him; the Guises "waited for him to go and embrace them"; the apartments which ought to have been reserved for the first Prince of the Blood were occupied by the duke, and,

had not the Maréchal de Saint-André offered him his, he would have been unable to find a lodging. The following day there was a meeting of the Council, but the expected summons to it did not arrive. Never had the first Prince of the Blood been treated in such fashion !

The explanation is that the Guises had succeeded in inspiring François II with the most profound distrust of his kinsmen, the Bourbons. The Cardinal de Lorraine did not cease to repeat that his Majesty would be well advised to keep the King of Navarre and the Prince de Condé at a distance from his person, "because, seeing that he was of a delicate constitution and childless, with brothers still infants, they might well be tempted, by means of some wickedness, such as poison or ambushes, to abridge their road to the throne." These insinuations so terrified the poor young King that nothing was able to banish them from his mind.

The King of Navarre, whom the cardinal was representing as a redoubtable conspirator, did not even possess sufficient resolution to resent, by an open rupture with the Guises, the humiliating reception which he had encountered at the Court, though his brother, the Prince de Condé, whom they were on the point of getting rid of temporarily, under the pretext of an honourable mission to Brussels, to ratify, in the name of the new King, the Treaty of Cateau-Cambrésis, urged him to have recourse to arms rather than submit to their arrogant usurpation of authority. He remained at Saint-Germain, amusing himself with the beasts of the forest and the beauties of the Court, and early in the autumn tamely followed François II to Rheims, where, on September 18, the new King was consecrated and crowned by the Cardinal de Lorraine, in his quality of Archbishop of Rheims.

At the banquet at the archbishop's palace which followed the *Sacre*, the Maréchal de Saint-André discharged the duties of Grand Master, in place of François de Montmorency, who up to that time had been accus-

tomed to replace his father on such occasions. This was naturally regarded as foreshadowing the elder Montmorency's loss of this important office; and, in point of fact, the Duc de Guise, now that he had become all-powerful, was determined to despoil him of it, and had requested the Queen-mother to represent to Montmorency that the holding of the Grand Mastership was incompatible with the post of Constable. Catherine, who did not venture to refuse, addressed herself to the Châtillons and begged them to procure their uncle's resignation. The old man defended himself, objecting that the office was for life, and that the late King had promised the succession to his eldest son; upon which he was coldly informed that the *bâton* of Marshal of France would be conferred upon François de Montmorency, by way of compensation; but that, if the father declined to resign, the son would be neither Grand Master nor Marshal. The Constable demanded time for reflection, and, having taken counsel with his friends, prudently decided to yield, and resigned the Grand Mastership and the immense patronage which went with it, which the King immediately conferred upon the Duc de Guise, notwithstanding that the latter was already in possession of the office of Grand Huntsman and Grand Chamberlain. About the same time, Coligny, who held the governments of both Picardy and Normandy, was persuaded to resign the former charge, on the distinct understanding that it should be bestowed upon the Prince de Condé, who had married the Admiral's niece, Éléonore de Roye. The Court, however, deceived him, and Picardy was given to the Maréchal de Brissac, who was thus gained over to the cause of the Guises. The process of dismissals or enforced resignations continued, and almost all the governors of towns and fortresses upon whose support the Lorraine princes were unable to rely were, on one pretext or another, removed and replaced by trusted adherents of the dominant faction.

CHAPTER XVI

General discontent aroused by the despotic rule of the Guises—They persuade François II and Mary Stuart to assume the titles of King and Queen of Scotland and England—Irritation of Elizabeth, who secretly foments opposition to the Guises—Double game of Catherine de' Medici—The position of the Guises momentarily strengthened by the support of Philip II and the weakness of Antoine de Bourbon, King of Navarre—Louis de Bourbon, Prince de Condé—His character and ambitions—He becomes the *capitaine muet* of a formidable conspiracy, centralised and directed by the Sieur de la Renaudie—The plans of the conspirators betrayed to the Guises—"The Tumult of Amboise"—Its failure—Feroocious vengeance of the Guises—The executions witnessed by the young King and his brothers—Death of the Chancellor Olivier—Critical situation of the Prince de Condé, who is saved for the moment by his coolness and audacity.

THE triumph of the Guises seemed complete; but a régime which was offending so many powerful interests could not long exist without encountering serious opposition. The masses, particularly in Paris, where the name of Guise had long been one to conjure with, were well disposed towards the victor of Calais; but the commercial classes, though they had welcomed the recall of the Chancellor Olivier to the office which the Guises had compelled him to resign seven years before, as the hope of an administration less immoral and extravagant than its predecessor, deeply resented the contemptuous disregard of their interests shown by the Cardinal de Lorraine, who had refused to recognise a number of contracts entered into by the late Government, an action which had a most disastrous effect upon the public credit. Great dissatisfaction was also aroused by the suppression of numerous posts in the Army, the Royal Household, the Courts of Justice, and

in various Government offices, which, though in itself a reasonable and even a necessary measure, as the military ones had become useless since the peace and most of the rest were mere sinecures, was carried out without the least consideration for those who thus suddenly found themselves dispossessed, in some cases of their only means of livelihood. The nobility were indignant at seeing the Court dominated by foreign princes, and the Bourbons, whom they were accustomed to regard as their natural chiefs, not only excluded from all share in the government, but practically ostracized; while patriotic Frenchmen of all classes condemned the surrender of the sovereignty over the duchy of Bar, imposed on the young King by his wife's uncles, in favour of the nominal chief of their House, the Duke of Lorraine. Finally, the rigorous enforcement of the edicts against the Huguenots, as the French Reformers were now beginning to be called, to distinguish them from the Lutherans, and the barbarous executions which followed one upon another, of which that of Du Bourg was the most notable, aroused the indignation of all humane and liberal-minded men, and exasperated the Protestants almost beyond endurance.

In their foreign policy, the Guises were even more unhappily inspired than in their internal administration. Always dominated by the interests of their House and the advantages of the moment, they persuaded François II and Mary Stuart to assume the titles of King and Queen of Scotland *and* England, regarding this double crown beyond the sea as the dowry of their niece and the legitimation of their power. To wish to annex the British Isles to France, under the pretext of the dubious rights of a Lorraine princess, was an enterprise worthy of an extravagant dreamer like the cardinal; but it is singular to find the Duc de Guise, who was of a practical turn of mind, lending his countenance to such preposterous claims. The result was not only to irritate Elizabeth, whose Ambassador protested warmly against

these pretensions, but to alarm Philip II, who feared above all things the union of France, England, and Scotland under one Sovereign, and to bring about a sort of temporary *rapprochement* between the heretic Queen and the chief of orthodoxy, who dissuaded the new Pope, Pius IV, from launching a Bull of deposition against Elizabeth.

Elizabeth's irritation soon began to assume a more practical form than diplomatic protests, and there can be very little doubt that the English Government secretly encouraged the opposition to the Guises by every means in its power. And this opposition was gathering strength every day; "the air was full of cries, sounds, and defamatory libels," and pamphlets and brochures were widely circulated calling for "the free assembly of the States-General to remedy the disorders of the present time."

The dreaded name of the States-General and some signs of restiveness on the part of the King of Navarre, whom the Montmorencies and Châtillons were endeavouring to arouse to action, drew the Queen-mother momentarily towards the Guises, and together they persuaded the King that "whosoever spoke of convening the States-General was his mortal enemy, and culpable of *lèse-majesté*; since, if this opening were afforded it, his people would give the law to him from whom it ought to receive it, so that nothing would remain to him of kingship, save the title only." Catherine was playing a double game. She affected to be a stranger to the affronts inflicted by the Guises on the Bourbons, as well as to their severities towards the Protestants, "treated the Princes with courtesy, entertained those of the Religion with good hopes, and retained in her service many demoiselles suspected of heresy." But, at the same time, at the request of the Guises, she wrote to Philip of Spain, warning him that the King of Navarre and the Princes "desired, by means of the States-General, to reduce her to the condition of a chamber-

maid and to bring to nothing the authority of the King, her son.”¹

Philip was far from trusting the Guises, and, as we have seen, viewed with no friendly eye the claim to the English throne which they had persuaded the young King and Queen to put forward; but he attached the greatest importance to the exclusion of the Bourbons, with their heretical tendencies, from any share in the government of France. He accordingly replied that he would willingly employ all the resources of his dominions to maintain the authority of the King, his brother-in-law, and of the Ministers of that prince, and would place, for that purpose, 50,000 men at their disposal, should the need arise.

Philip was promising what he would have found very difficult to perform, since, in point of fact, he had just then neither soldiers nor money to spare. But his letter, read in full Council, in the presence of the King of Navarre, who had received a belated summons to that assembly, produced the effect desired; and Antoine, trembling for the safety of his Pyrenean States, promptly abandoned his political machinations, and was only too happy to accept the mission of conducting the new Queen of Spain to the frontier of her husband's kingdom. Thus, thanks to the weakness of the first Prince of the Blood, the position of the Guises was for the moment strengthened, and, to prove themselves worthy of the protection of his Catholic Majesty, they redoubled their persecution of the unfortunate Protestants.

But, if the King of Navarre were too pusillanimous to compromise himself, his youngest brother, the Prince de Condé, was made of sterner metal. This prince was now in his thirtieth year—twelve years Antoine's junior and seven years that of his other surviving brother, the Cardinal de Bourbon. Unlike his ancestors, who had been tall men of imposing presence, he was short and slightly built, and some anecdote-mongers even represent

¹ Regnier de la Planche.

him as hump-backed. Admitting, however, that he may have been hump-backed, the imputation of actual deformity is scarcely reconcilable with the well-known popular song concerning him :

"Ce petit homme tant jolly,
Qui tousjours cause et tousjours ry
Et tousjours baise sa mignonne,
Dieu gard' de mal le petit homme."

Moreover, if somewhat diminutive in stature, he was "nimble and vigorous, and as adroit at martial exercises, both on foot and on horseback, as any man in France." His features, too, were pleasing without being regular, and illuminated by a pair of very bright eyes ; he had excellent natural abilities, and had not neglected to cultivate them, being exceptionally well-informed and a good conversationalist, with a touch of sarcasm, which, however, his good-humour deprived of its sting, and "agreeable, accessible, and amiable."¹

Condé had served with considerable distinction in the wars of the preceding reign, notably at Doullens, in the summer of 1553, where he brought up four squadrons of light cavalry at a critical moment, and, by a brilliant charge on the enemy's flank, decided the day ; and on the disastrous day of Saint-Quentin, when, amidst the general panic, he had shown the most admirable courage and presence of mind, and had succeeded in cutting his way with the cavalry he commanded through the midst of the victorious enemy and reaching La Fère. The jealousy of the Guises had, however, prevented him receiving any adequate recognition of his services ; and when, at the beginning of the following year, he had solicited the post of colonel-general of the light cavalry, which he had so gallantly led, he was, to his profound mortification, passed over in favour of the Duc de Nemours, the candidate of the Lorraine princes. It is true that, by way of compensation, he was nominated colonel-general of the Cisalpine infantry, that is to say,

¹ Brantôme.

of the infantry stationed in Piedmont; but, since France had lately withdrawn all her troops from Piedmont, with the exception of a few garrisons, the appointment was regarded rather as an affront than an honour.

If the young prince's patience had been sorely tried during the reign which had just terminated, it was still more severely tested when, on the accession of François II, he beheld the royal authority concentrated in the hands of those whose aim it had always been to exclude his family from their rightful share in the direction of affairs. He was poor, ambitious, full of courage and energy, and not overburdened by scruples, and, unlike his brother, the King of Navarre, he had little to risk in a struggle against the Government. He saw that the Reformation had ceased to be a religious movement, and was rapidly developing into a formidable political combination, with which it was the interest of discontented and ambitious nobles to make common cause, without in any way partaking of its spiritual aspirations. With his gay and pleasure-loving nature, he could have had but little sympathy with the austere tenets of Calvinism; but the mortifications he had experienced, the hope of uniting his fortunes with the chances of success which the Reformers had to offer, and, above all, his hatred of the Guises, decided him to embrace their faith and their cause. Accordingly, on his return from his diplomatic mission to Brussels, he prepared for energetic action against the enemies of his House and entered into close relations with the party of the "Malcontents."

Although the Huguenots, radically opposed to the Guises, as to the sworn enemies of their faith, formed the bulk of this party, they were being continually reinforced by numbers of persons, total strangers to the religious controversy, whom the tyranny and insolence of the Guises, and particularly of the Cardinal de Lorraine, had driven into revolt.

The Duc de Guise was as brave a man as ever girded

on a sword, but the Cardinal de Lorraine was as cowardly as his elder brother was courageous. At an epoch and in a family where every one was brave to the point of temerity, this weakness, now that he had climbed so high, was very speedily remarked, and his prestige vanished forthwith; his great talents, his learning, his eloquence, his powers of fascination, counted for nothing in the estimation of the public. He became an object of contempt.

He likewise became an object of odium. Fear is a dangerous counsellor for those who usurp power, and cowards are notoriously cruel. The cardinal was not content with imprisoning those suspected of heresy; he imprisoned every one whom he suspected of cherishing ideas of opposition to his authority; and, as he saw conspirators everywhere and of every condition, from the humble keeper of a lodging-house to a Scottish nobleman who had come to compliment François II on his accession, the dungeons of Paris soon became inconveniently crowded, and a number of perfectly innocent persons died from the privations to which they were subjected. Finally, his Eminence's craven terrors drove him to an action which served to exasperate against himself and his brother a body of men whom it was most impolitic to offend.

The Peace of Cateau-Cambrésis had brought about the disbanding of a multitude of the poor nobility and other military men, who possessed nothing save their cloaks and swords. These discharged soldiers, with tattered doublets and faces pinched with hunger, followed the Court in crowds, soliciting either their arrears of pay or pensions and appointments. Their clamorous persistency alarmed the Cardinal de Lorraine, who feared a military *émeute* in which he might either be killed or carried off as a hostage, and in the excess of his terror, on reaching Blois, he persuaded the King to issue a proclamation, commanding that "all captains, soldiers, and men of war who had come thither to demand

recompense and money should take their departure on pain of death"; and, in order that this threat might produce a greater impression, the cardinal caused gibbets to be erected at the entrance to the château to hang those of the petitioners who had not vacated the precincts of the Court within twenty-four hours.¹

These measures appear to have been adopted without consulting the Duc de Guise. Anyway, he subsequently endeavoured to diminish the evil effect of such maladroit severity by sending for some of his old companions-in-arms and entertaining them very hospitably, after which he advised them to return to their homes, promising to inquire personally into their claims and do everything in his power to satisfy them. But the mischief had been done, and the old soldiers of Henri II, exasperated by such shameful treatment, withdrew, vowing vengeance against the Guises. Some departed to offer their services to the Huguenots; while others retired into the woods around Blois, formed themselves into armed bands, and assumed so threatening an attitude that the young King, "encountering one of them while on his chase, was in such fear that he was forced to leave his pastime, and to leave the hounds uncoupled, and retire to the Court. Whereupon there was commendment given to the Scottish Guard to wear jackets of mail and pistols."²

Meanwhile, the anti-Lorraine movement was being steadily organised. The programme of the "Malcontents" comprised the convocation of the States-General, the liberty of the Reformed religion, the removal of the Guises from power, and their substitution by the Princes of the Blood. It was well understood that nothing was to be attempted against the person of the King. In October 1559, there was a meeting at La Ferté-sous-Jouarre, at which Condé accepted the leadership. But he had the prudence to remain behind the scenes; he

¹ De Thou; Brantôme.

² Killigrew to Queen Elizabeth, November 15, 1559.

was designated by the name of the "*capitaine muet*." The active leader of the conspiracy, who centralised and directed it, was a Perigourdin gentleman, Godefroi de Berri or de Barry, Sieur de la Renaudie, "one of those violent, bold, and resourceful characters who are capable, according to circumstances, of descending to the level of the adventurer or rising to the sublimity of the hero."¹ La Renaudie travelled all over the kingdom, placed the malcontents of the different provinces in communication with one another, and with the Protestant refugees of Geneva, Lausanne, Berne, and Strasbourg, and informed them that he was only the lieutenant of a *capitaine muet*, a secret chief of great authority, who would take his place at their head when the moment arrived to declare himself.

Despite the counsels of Calvin and of the Châtillons, La Renaudie did not recoil from the employment of the most violent means. On February 1, a secret assembly, under his presidency, met at Nantes, with the connivance of the Sieur de Sanzay, the lieutenant of the Constable at the château. That old gentleman, it should be mentioned, though he was careful not to compromise himself in so doubtful an enterprise, was indirectly assisting it. The members of this assembly were drawn from all parts of France, and, as a certain number of the bourgeois figured among the nobility, they claimed to represent the States-General, *pour extrême nécessité*. La Renaudie read to the assembly the opinions of various jurisconsults and theologians, both French and German, who all agreed that, as the King was evidently incapable of governing by himself, they were justified in taking up arms to oppose the Government which "those of Guise" had usurped. At the same time, he protested that there was no question of "attempting anything against the majesty of the King, the Princes of the Blood, or the legitimate state of the realm," but only of putting an end to the tyranny of the Guises, whom he accused

¹ Henri Martin, *Histoire de France jusqu'en 1789*.

of aiming, not only at the extermination of "those of the Religion," but at the ruin of the nobility and the destruction of the Royal House. All present took an oath of fidelity to La Renaudie as lieutenant of the "dumb captain," whose name was then revealed to them, and a council of war was chosen to assist him. As a result of its deliberations, it was decided that a great number of persons, unarmed, should proceed to Blois and present to the King a petition for the liberty of the Reformed religion; that five hundred gentlemen on horseback, and twice that number on foot, should follow them, and appear suddenly, on March 10, at the gates of Blois, which were to be opened to them by the first arrivals, and that, Condé having placed himself at their head, they should seize the Duc de Guise and the Cardinal de Lorraine, and, with the aid of those who would rally to their support from all sides, establish a legitimate Government.

The conspiracy was combined with too many accomplices to remain a secret, with too many partisans to succeed. As early as February 12, the Guises were placed on their guard by their friends in Germany. A few days later, La Renaudie, who had come to Paris to consult with his confederates there, found himself obliged to confide a part of his plans to a Protestant advocate named Des Avenelles, at whose house he lodged. Des Avenelles, becoming alarmed, revealed all he knew to Guise's secretary, who lost no time in warning his master. Towards the end of February, the Bishop of Arras sent the Government, through the Spanish Ambassador, further valuable information concerning the conspiracy, which had been gleaned by some of the innumerable spies whom Philip II kept in every country in Europe.

The Cardinal de Lorraine, in great alarm, wished to summon troops from all the garrisons in that part of France to their succour, and call upon all the faithful subjects of the King to take up arms. But his brother

opposed this project, and insisted that they should take their defensive measures as secretly as possible, and content themselves with transferring the young King from Blois, which it would be too difficult to defend against a sudden attack, to the Château of Amboise, the terraces of which overlooked the course of the Loire, and where there was less danger of a surprise. The removal of the Court to Amboise took place on February 22, and the duke at once despatched couriers to summon thither all the gentlemen of the neighbourhood upon whose fidelity he could rely, and very soon had quietly assembled a force of nearly three thousand horse in the environs of the town.

Renouncing the idea of laying their hands on the Bourbons and the Montmorencies, whom they strongly suspected of being no strangers to the conspiracy against them, the Guises determined to make sure of the Châtillons, and persuaded the Queen-mother to summon Coligny and Andelot to Amboise, on the pretext of consulting them about the preparations for an expedition against England. They arrived at the beginning of March, accompanied by their brother, the Cardinal de Châtillon, and were well received by Catherine, though there was no further question of the English expedition. Their advice was, however, sought with regard to the religious troubles, upon which Coligny bluntly declared that it was no longer possible to exterminate the Reformers by force, and that the only means of securing peace was to afford them a respite from persecution. His counsel was warmly supported by the Chancellor Olivier, and the Guises, half yielding, in the hope of disarming the majority of the Protestants while crushing the conspiracy, an edict of amnesty was issued, though the reservations which were attached to it rendered it of comparatively little value.

A day or two later, to the astonishment of the Guises, Condé arrived at Amboise. The prince, as we have seen, had arranged with La Renaudie to precede the

conspirators to the Court, and though its sudden removal from Blois must have warned him that the Guises had got wind of the plot, he had courageously adhered to his engagement. But the suspicions that they entertained concerning him were as yet supported by such slender proofs that they felt obliged to receive him, and even to confide to him the defence of one of the gates of the town, though the Duc de Guise took the precaution of stationing his brother the Grand Prior and a few of his most trusty friends at the same post.

The knowledge that their designs were suspected, and the removal of the Court to Amboise, had not caused La Renaudie and his accomplices to abandon the enterprise. They had merely modified their plan, and postponed the attack for twenty-four hours. The last measures were decided upon at a meeting of the chiefs of the conspiracy which was held at the Château of La Corretiére, six leagues from Amboise. Edmé de Ferrières, Sieur de Maligny, a daring young noble, who had formerly held the post of cornet in Condé's *compagnie d'ordonnance*, was, with fifty men, to introduce himself into the town and remain concealed there; while thirty of the conspirators were, with the aid of friends about the Court, to be lodged in the château itself. On the day fixed, La Renaudie, the Baron de Castelnau-Charosse, and 500 gentlemen, who were to assemble at the strongly-fortified Château of Noizay, would invade Amboise and occupy the approaches to the château. Then, upon a signal given from the roof of the royal residence, the bands massed in the surrounding woods would issue forth to join the assailants. All together, they would force the gates of the château, if they were not opened to them, and would proceed to demand of the King, sword in hand, that the Guises should be delivered up to them, and that he would deign to listen to their humble remonstrances.

All was prepared, and the confederates, journeying in small bands, in order not to arouse suspicion, were

approaching the Loire, when one of their chiefs named Lignières turned traitor and revealed their plans to the Guises. This second betrayal ruined everything. The Duc de Guise at once took measures to meet the threatened attack. He changed the guards and replaced those whose fidelity was in the least open to suspicion by men upon whom he could rely; he sent troops to occupy all the approaches to Amboise, and, informed of the different places of rendezvous, he despatched in the directions indicated strong detachments of cavalry, who fell upon the advanced parties of the confederates. The latter, taken by surprise and, for the most part, still unarmed, were easily overpowered and made prisoners, those who offered resistance being cut down.

However, a troop of Gascon and Béarnais gentlemen, under the command of Castelnau, contrived to throw themselves into the Château of Noizay, where they intended to await the arrival of La Renaudie. Before, however, he could reach them they were surrounded by a strong force commanded by the Duc de Nemours. Nemours, anxious to avoid a siege, which would have resulted in rallying to Noizay all the rebels and disbanded soldiers in the neighbourhood, proposed to Castelnau and his followers to surrender, when he would himself conduct them to the King, in order that they might have an opportunity of acquainting his Majesty with their grievances. "The duke swore on the faith of a gentleman, on his honour, and on the damnation of his soul, and, beyond that, signed with his own hand: 'Jacques de Savoie,' that he would bring them back safe and sound and that no harm should befall them." Upon which Castelnau and fourteen of his companions accepted his offer, "all considering it a great honour and advantage to have thus free access to the King." No sooner, however, had they reached Amboise than the Guises, refusing to be bound by the solemn pledge which Nemours had given, caused these unfortunate gentlemen to be seized and conveyed to the dungeons of the

château, where they were put to the *question* and "tormented with hellish cruelty," with the object of inducing them to reveal the names of the real leaders of the conspiracy.¹

The surrender of Noizay, from which the grand attack of the 16th was to have been directed, disorganised completely the plans of the conspirators. At the sight of the prisoners, their accomplices who were lodged in the château and town of Amboise hastened to gain the open country, and Condé had no longer any thought but to make a good figure among the "defenders of the King."

On the 18th, La Renaudie was killed in a skirmish in the woods near Château-Renaud. His body was conveyed to Amboise and suspended from a gibbet which had been erected on the bridge over the Loire, with a paper attached to it bearing this inscription: "La Renaudie, chief of the rebels."

Despite the reverses of the conspirators, they were animated by so much courage and determination, that, on the morrow of the death of their leader, several detachments of them, having succeeded in effecting a junction, advanced upon Amboise and made a desperate attack upon the town in full day. Had it been delivered the preceding night, as had been intended, it might perhaps have succeeded. But La Roche-Chandieu, the captain of the detachment which was advancing from Blois, did not arrive until the sun had risen; and, cannon being brought into play, the assailants were repulsed with considerable loss. No resource was now left them save to disperse and seek safety in flight; but they were hunted down by the cavalry quartered in the town and its environs, who slew without mercy all who offered resistance, and brought the others back as prisoners in batches of ten and fifteen, tied to the tails of their horses.

The task of the soldiers being finished, that of the executioners began. In the first days of the "Tumult

¹ Vieilleville.

of Amboise," the young King, if we are to believe Regnier de la Planche, had demanded, with tears in his eyes, what harm he had done to his people to cause them to act in such a manner, and had said to Guise: "I know not what it is that they desire, but I hear that they only want you; I should desire that you leave me here for a time, in order that I may see whether it is you or myself that they want." But the Guises refused even to consider this suggestion, "assuring their royal nephew that neither he nor his brothers would live one hour after their departure, and that the House of Bourbon thought only of exterminating the Royal House." However that may be, the Lorraine princes, aided by Mary Stuart, succeeded in so terrifying François II, that on March 17, notwithstanding the opposition of the Queen-mother and the Chancellor Olivier, he nominated the Duc de Guise his Lieutenant-General of the Kingdom, with unlimited powers. All that Olivier was able to obtain was an amnesty in favour of "those of the enterprise" who returned peaceably to their homes; but the attack on Amboise caused this amnesty to be revoked two days later.

Nothing now intervened between the victorious faction and its vengeance; and that vengeance was atrocious, pitiless. Numbers of the prisoners were hanged immediately on their arrival at Amboise without any form of trial, and, since there were insufficient gibbets to accommodate all these victims, the battlements and the gates of the château bore their bunches of human grapes. Numbers of others were cast into the Loire, tied up in sacks,¹ or attached six, eight, or a dozen at a time to long poles, and the river was soon covered with corpses. The nobles and gentlemen were decapitated on scaffolds erected in one of the courtyards of the château.

"Those of Guise," says a contemporary writer, "re-

¹ "The 17th there were 22 of these rebels drowned in saks, and the 18th at night 25 more" (Throckmorton to Queen Elizabeth).

served the chiefs until after dinner, in order to afford some pastime to the ladies, and they and the ladies placed themselves at the windows, just as though it had been a question of enjoying the sight of some mummery; and, what is worse, the King and his young brothers appeared at these spectacles, as though one had wished to embitter them, and the victims were pointed out to them by the cardinal [de Lorraine], with the gestures of a man greatly rejoiced; and when they died with noble constancy, he observed: "Look, Sire, at those shameless and desperate men. See how the fear of death is powerless to abate their pride and wickedness! What would they do, then, if they held you in their power!"¹

"Such," writes Henri Martin, "were the sights which weakened the frail constitution of François II, and depraved the youthful imagination and perverted the happy and brilliant faculties of the eldest of his brothers. Can we be astonished that such an education should have produced a Charles IX? The Cardinal de Lorraine avenged himself with the cruelty of the coward, urged on by the fear which possessed him. With the Duc de Guise, it was not a question of fear, but of fury: he felt that he was committed irrevocably to a desperate struggle, in which he might lose life and perhaps honour, and the hero of Metz and of Calais was no longer anything but a partisan drunk with blood."

What particularly exasperated him was the attitude of those unfortunate men, the majority of whom were to their death defying him and his brothers. The Châtillons, the Queen-mother, and even one of the Guises, the Duc d'Aumale, endeavoured to save the Baron de Castelnau, who belonged to an illustrious family, and who had served the Royal House with distinction; and the Duchesse de Guise, who was in love with the handsome Duc de Nemours and wished to spare him the disgrace of seeing the capitulation

¹ Regnier de la Planche.

signed with his own hand so shamefully violated, joined her entreaties to theirs, and pleaded, not only for the life of Castelnau, but for those of all the prisoners who had surrendered at Noizay. But Guise and the cardinal, furious that not even the most fiendish torments had been capable of wringing from these brave gentlemen a confession of the complicity of the Bourbon princes, rendered the King inexorable.

When his condemnation for the crime of *lèse-majesté* was read to him, Castelnau exclaimed: "We are guilty of *lèse-majesté*, if the Guises are already kings"; and, as he mounted the scaffold, he predicted that the vengeance of God would fall upon them. A gentleman named Villemongis, before offering his neck to the executioner's axe, steeped his hands in the blood of those who had preceded him to the block, and, raising them to Heaven, cried: "Lord, behold the blood of Thy children! Thou wilt avenge it!"

The Chancellor Olivier, a well-meaning but weak and timid man, who, although he had been on friendly terms with Castelnau and many other Reformers and secretly shared their religious views, had not had the courage to refuse to become the instrument of the victorious Guises, was so overcome by the reproaches which the condemned addressed to him that he took to his bed and never rose from it again. The Cardinal de Lorraine, coming to visit him, he repulsed him, crying: "Ah, cursed cardinal! You have damned yourself and you have caused us all to be damned!" "My son," replied the cardinal, "reject the Evil One." "I see him now," exclaimed the dying man, with a hideous laugh. And he expired on March 30, without receiving the Sacraments.

The Guises, so far from feeling any contrition, desired to push their vengeance still further, and to strike off more noble heads. They did not believe that La Renaudie and his fellow-conspirators would have taken up arms unless at the instigation of some very important

personage. They suspected the Châtillons, but from afar the great shadow of the Constable protected his nephews, besides which they had no pretext for arresting them. In regard to Condé, who had so imprudently placed himself in their power, they had better than pretexts. All the prisoners had not shown the heroic firmness of Castelnau and his comrades, and, in the anguish of torture, La Bigue, La Renaudie's secretary, had confessed that the "dumb captain" was none other than the Prince de Condé. Others had confirmed the statement. Meantime, Maligny, who was among those captives of whom it had been intended to make a signal example, had succeeded in effecting his escape; and it was ascertained that an equerry of the prince named De-Vaux had connived at it, and furnished him with one of his master's best horses.

Condé received orders not to leave the Court without express permission from the King; his papers were searched, and, though they contained nothing incriminating, François II told him to his face that he was "accused of being the chief of the conspiracy," and his position appeared a critical one. But the prince's coolness and audacity did not fail him. Cleverly assuming an air of outraged innocence, he complained loudly of the suspicions of which he was the object, and begged his Majesty to assemble the Princes, the Chevaliers of the Order of Saint-Michel, the members of the Privy Council, and the foreign Ambassadors who happened to be at Amboise, to hear his justification. On their arrival, he boldly declared that "whosoever had reported to the King that he was the chief and director of certain seditious persons who were said to have conspired against his person and State had falsely and wickedly lied, and that, being willing to waive in those circumstances his dignity of Prince of the Blood, he was prepared to make them confess at the point of the sword that they were poltroons and *canailles*, seeking themselves the subversion of the State and the Crown, of which

he had a better title to be the protector than his accusers."

This bold language completely disconcerted the Guises; and the duke, aware that evidence more substantial than the confessions under torture of obscure accomplices would be required to justify a Prince of the Blood being brought to trial on a charge of direct participation in the conspiracy, at once decided to dissimulate his suspicions and to affect to regard Condé as a faithful supporter of the Government. Accordingly, when the prince had concluded, he stepped forward, not to pick up the glove which had just been thrown in his face, but to announce that, as a kinsman of his Highness, he should claim the privilege of acting as his second, if there should be any one who desired to accept the challenge. No one, of course, came forward; and a few days later Condé quitted the Court, and, having adopted the precaution to make a *détour*, with the object of avoiding any ambushes which might have been laid for him on the way, rejoined his brother, the King of Navarre, in Béarn. The Châtillons also took their departure, without making any attempt to conceal their profound resentment against the Guises.

CHAPTER XVII

The atrocious cruelty of the Guises at Amboise recoils on their own heads, and their authority declines daily—They endeavour to propitiate the Queen-mother, who secures the appointment of Michel l'Hôpital as Chancellor—Character and aims of l'Hôpital—He dissuades the Guises from introducing the Inquisition into France—Edict of Romorantin—Death of Marie de Lorraine—Triumph of the Scottish Reformers—Disturbed condition of France—Assembly of the Notables at Fontainebleau—Coligny denounces the religious policy and government of the Guises—Intrigues of Navarre and Condé—Violent war of pamphlets against the Guises—Arrest of a secret agent of the King of Navarre—The Guises resolve on the destruction of the Bourbons—Navarre and Condé are summoned to Orléans, where the latter is arrested—He is brought to trial for high treason and condemned "to lose his head on the scaffold"—Sudden illness of the young King—Consternation of the Guises—Catherine de' Medici intimidates Navarre into renouncing his rights to the regency—Death of François II—Arrival of the Constable at Orléans—End of the despotism of the Guises.

THE ferocity with which the Guises had repressed the conspiracy of Amboise recoiled on their own heads. The opinion was general that they had sought to avenge merely a personal offence; for all the conspirators had maintained, even under torture, that the enterprise had been aimed against them alone, and that nothing had been intended against the person of the King. The Constable, charged to render an account of the affair to the Parlement of Paris, adroitly succeeded in insinuating into his narration of the facts remarks which reduced the supposed attempt upon the royal person to one undertaken by foolish men of humble condition against his Majesty's principal servants and Ministers. It was the tactics of the Opposition to say, or to allow it to be said, that the policy of the Lorraine princes was the sole cause of the rising.

And these tactics succeeded so well that, after nine months of absolute power, the two chiefs of the House

of Guise perceived their authority declining from day to day, and felt the necessity of propitiating the Queen-mother, to whom they had hitherto denied any voice in the management of affairs. Catherine took advantage of this to nominate for the office of Chancellor, rendered vacant by the death of the remorse-stricken Olivier, Michel de l'Hôpital, a former First President of the *Chambre des Comptes*, who, on the accession of François II, had been admitted to the Privy Council through the protection of the Guises. In gratitude, he had celebrated in Latin verse, in the composition of which he possessed unusual talent, the military exploits of the duke and the eloquence of the cardinal, and the Guises, believing themselves assured of his fidelity, had raised no objection to the Seals being conferred upon him. But l'Hôpital, "with his long, white beard, his pale face, and his grave manner," was a real statesman, a true patriot, with a soul far above party, and "so soon as he had been established in his charge," he resolved "to walk honestly as a politician, and to favour neither one side nor the other, in order that he might serve his King and his country."¹ He was, however, not only an honourable but a prudent man, and was careful not to contradict the Guises or to oppose them to their faces; and he conducted himself with such adroitness that he deceived the Ministers as to his intentions. He clung to the belief that, in the midst of the furious strife of faction, there was yet room for a régime of tolerance, prudence, and good sense. Unhappily, it was too late to bridle the ferocious passions unloosed by the imprudence of François I and Henri II; but all that any statesman could have achieved, in the face of the difficulties with which he had to contend, was done by l'Hôpital.

The first service which he rendered to France was to save it from the Spanish Inquisition, which the Guises wished to introduce after the Conspiracy of Amboise. L'Hôpital showed them, by the example of

¹ Brantôme.

Rome and Naples, that this would serve to raise against them, not only the Protestants, but all except the most bigoted Catholics, and persuaded them to renounce the idea. The Guises, however, insisted that, in default of the Inquisition, the episcopal jurisdiction should henceforth alone have cognisance of the crime of heresy, and an edict to that effect was issued at Romorantin in the following May. But l'Hôpital interpreted the edict in a manner which singularly modified its effects, and also succeeded in introducing into it a clause which subjected the authors of calumnious denunciations to the severest penalties. The result was that the persecution of the Protestants was sensibly relaxed, and those imprisoned on charges of heresy were set at liberty.

Events in Scotland, which had struck a severe blow at the prestige of the Guises, had contributed to render those princes more tractable. At the end of 1557, the Scottish Reformers, guided by the fiery preacher John Knox, had formed themselves into a "Congregation" for the public establishment of their religion. For eighteen months the Regent, Marie de Lorraine, hesitated to take the offensive against them; but, after the Treaty of Cateau-Cambrésis, her brothers, the Guises, aware that they were out of favour with Henri II and anxious to recapture the royal good-will by a striking success, persuaded her to issue a decree of proscription against all religious innovations. War broke out, and the Reformers proscribed, in their turn, the Roman Catholic religion and declared the Regent deposed (June-October, 1559). The Guises despatched French troops to their sister's aid, and for a while the balance inclined to her side; but the Lords of the Congregation appealed to England for assistance, and Elizabeth, provoked by the pretensions of Mary Stuart to the English throne, resolved to intervene. She accordingly published a very adroit manifesto, wherein she protested her desire to remain at peace with France and blamed the Guises for having reduced her to the necessity of

taking up arms to defend her throne, and, at the same time, the liberty of the Scots. An English fleet and army was despatched to Scotland, and the French troops were closely blockaded in Leith. On June 10, 1560, Marie de Lorraine, worn out by fatigue and mortification, died; and her death completed the ruin of the Catholic cause in Scotland. A treaty was signed which stipulated that the English and French troops should evacuate Scotland; that a general amnesty should be accorded, and that François II and Mary Stuart should renounce the title of King and Queen of England (July 6). Shortly afterwards, the Lords of the Congregation assembled the Parliament, and caused the establishment of the Reformed religion to be decreed, and the practice of the Roman Catholic to be forbidden under the severest penalties. François II and Mary Stuart vainly refused their ratification, and Scotland remained Protestant and under the influence of England. Thus, the end so long pursued by English policy was at length achieved: the old alliance of France and Scotland was broken, and the loss of Calais abundantly avenged.

Notwithstanding the relaxation of persecution which followed the Edict of Romorantin, the country continued in a very disturbed condition; the Reformers reviled the Guises in the most violent manner in their pamphlets, and armed bands of Protestants roamed about Provence, Dauphiné, and Guienne, committing many excesses. It was becoming every day more apparent that effective measures must be adopted to restore tranquillity, and on August 21, 1560, on the advice probably of the Chancellor and Coligny, an Assembly of Notables was convened at Fontainebleau to discuss the situation. The King of Navarre and the Prince de Condé had been invited to take part in it, but both judged it more prudent to remain in Guienne, and accordingly excused themselves, and left their brother, the invertebrate Cardinal de Bourbon, to represent the elder branch of their family.

The King opened the proceedings by a few words, in which he informed the assembly of the reasons which had induced him to convene it; the Queen-mother spoke to the same effect at greater length. Both invited those present to tender their advice in all sincerity. Then the Chancellor described the unhappy condition of the realm, and fixed the programme of the assembly, which was to consider the question of religion and of the public debt; after which, the Duc de Guise spoke of the war and foreign relations; the cardinal of the administration of the kingdom and of the finances. It was soon apparent, however, that military and financial questions had comparatively little interest for the notables beside the burning one of religion.

At the opening of the sitting of August 23, Coligny rose and presented to the King a petition signed by the "poor Christians" of his government of Normandy, who, after protesting their fidelity towards his Majesty, demanded that persecution should cease, and that they should be accorded the free exercise of their religion, and permission to build places of worship. These demands the Admiral supported in a long and very able speech. Three prelates, Morvilliers, Bishop of Orléans, Jean de Montluc, Bishop of Valence, brother of the famous captain, Blaise de Montluc, and Marillac, Archbishop of Vienne, were in accord in attributing the spread of heresy to the corruption of the Catholic clergy, condemned persecution, and proposed the double convocation of a national ecclesiastical council and of the States-General.

After the prelates, Coligny, who now stood forward definitely as the representative of Protestantism, explained the grievances of his party, and made a direct attack upon the religious policy and the government of the Guises. They surrounded the King, said he, with a new guard, just as if he were not sufficiently protected by the affection of his subjects. They persecuted the poor Christians, who asked nothing save to be permitted to

follow the Gospel. And he begged the King to be pleased to accord the petition which he had presented to him, declaring that he could, if necessary, obtain 50,000 signatures to it.

Irritated by the Admiral's outspoken language, the Duc de Guise angrily replied that if those who presented the petition could find 50,000 of their sect to support it, the King could oppose to it 1,000,000 of his own. He declared that it was against the King himself that the recent conspiracy had been directed, and it was useless to say that it was merely a movement against some of his Ministers. "All the councils in the world would not change his opinion, above all his belief in the Sacrament of the altar."

The Cardinal de Lorraine, more master of himself than his brother, professed himself sceptical as to the pacific intentions of the petitioners. He did not consider that the Reformers ought to be authorised to build places of worship; the liberty of holding their *prêches* in private houses ought to suffice them. He accepted the demand for the States-General, but considered that the question of an ecclesiastical council ought to be referred to an assembly of bishops convened by the King.

The majority of the assembly being of the cardinal's opinion, the King, on the departure of the Notables, summoned the States-General for December 10, 1560, at Meaux, and the assembly of the prelates for the following January 20. The petition presented by the Admiral was not accorded; but corporal punishment against "those who had strayed from the Faith" remained provisionally suspended, save against "the contrivers of conspiracies and seditions." The Guises counted on being able to make an extensive use of this reservation.

While the Notables at Fontainebleau were discussing the disturbed condition of the kingdom, in the South Condé and his elder brother, the King of Navarre, were

continuing the game which had succeeded so badly at Amboise, and secretly fomenting the discontent ; ready to profit by a success or to disavow a reverse. Their partisans laboured unceasingly to influence public opinion against the Government, and carried on a war of pamphlets in which the Guises were assailed in the most ferocious manner. One of the most virulent of these pamphlets, entitled, *l'Épître au tigre de la France*, a sort of *In Catilinam* against the Cardinal de Lorraine, thus apostrophised his Eminence : “ Ravening tiger ! Venomous viper ! Sepulchre of abomination ! How long wilt thou continue to abuse the youth of our young King ? Wilt thou never put an end to thy unmeasured ambition, to thy impostures, to thy robberies ! . . . detestable monster ! every one knows thee, every one sees thee, and yet thou art still alive. Begone, then ! Have done with thy tyranny ! Escape the hand of the executioner.” At the same time, prints illustrating various scenes from the sanguinary drama of Amboise were widely circulated : the Duc de Nemours negotiating with Castelnau and his comrades, and promising them, on his word as a prince, that their lives and liberty should be safeguarded ; Ville-mongis steeping his hands in the blood of his decapitated companions ; seven men hanged to the battlements of the château with long ropes ; the King and the ladies of the Court watching the executions, and so forth.

The passions excited by these savage appeals found vent in renewed disorders. In Provence and Dauphiné churches were sacked and images of the saints demolished, and frequent encounters took place between the Huguenot bands and the royal troops. A project was even formed to seize Lyons, where the Reformers were very numerous, and to convert it into a base of operations for the agitation in the South-East ; and Maligny, whom the Bourbons had entrusted with the direction of the enterprise, secretly introduced a number of soldiers into the town, whom he lodged at the houses of their co-religionists. However, at the last moment, the King of Navarre's

courage failed him, and he sent orders to Maligny to disband his men. The latter was proceeding to obey, when chance revealed to the authorities of the town the dépôt of arms which he had formed, and it was only after some pretty sharp fighting that he and his comrades succeeded in effecting their retreat.

The Guises, convinced that the Bourbons were at the back of all these disorders, determined to leave no means untried to secure evidence of their complicity. This time they succeeded.

Some days before the Assembly of the Notables, Antoine de Bourbon had sent to the Constable at Chantilly a Biscayan named La Sague, a former man-at-arms in the Maréchal de Montmorency's company. The official object of La Sague's journey was to obtain the Constable's permission to enter the service of the King of Navarre, but the secret one was to procure from Condé's mother-in-law, Madame de Roye, a large sum of money which she had promised the Princes for the prosecution of the conspiracy in the South. On leaving Chantilly, La Sague went to Paris, where he visited persons well known to be hostile to the Guises. The latter had him carefully watched, and, on his way back to Nérac, he was arrested, and several letters addressed to the Princes found upon him. Those written by the Constable contained nothing compromising, that old gentleman being far too astute to commit himself in writing, and, in the midst of the formal expressions of devotion which he employed towards the King of Navarre, it would have been difficult to find any trace of a plot. But the letters of François de Vendôme, Vidame de Chartres, a relative both of the Constable and the Bourbons, and known to be devoted to the interests of the latter, were far less discreet, and justified the immediate arrest of that nobleman, who was conducted to the Bastille.

At the end of August, La Sague was brought to Fontainebleau, where the Court was still in residence,

and put to the *question*. Torture wrested from him the revelation of an insurrection which the Princes were preparing against the Guises, and some writers say that he admitted that, if the wrapper containing the Vidame's letters were moistened, some lines written by the Constable's secretary to assure the Bourbons of his master's support would become visible. This is doubtful; any way, no attempt was made to molest Montmorency.

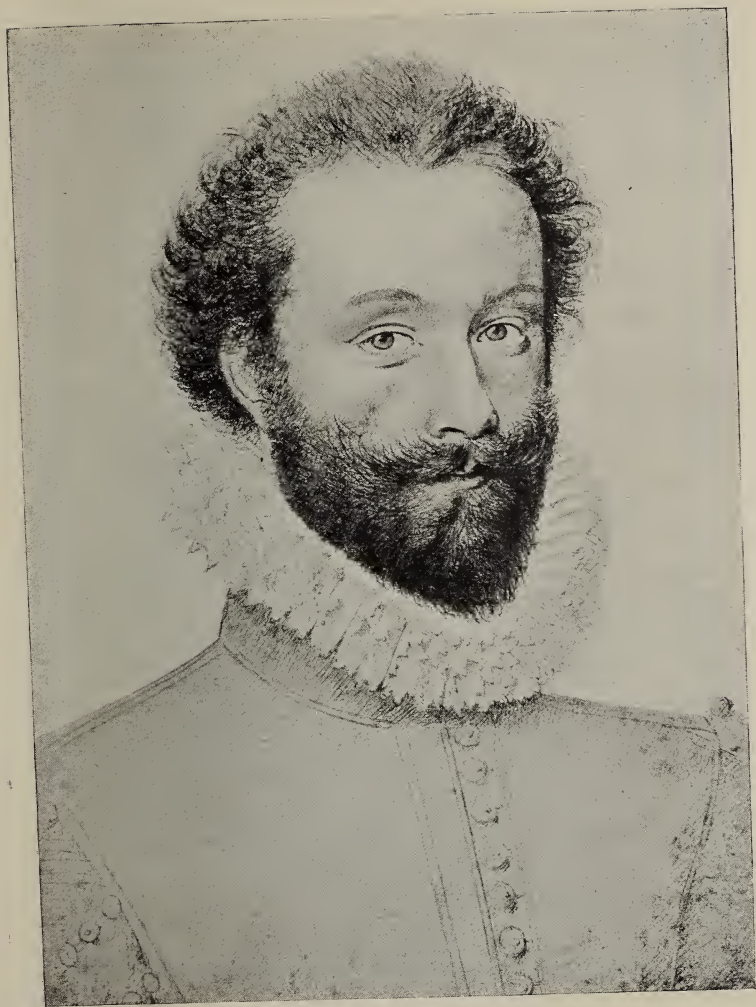
The revelations of La Sague convinced the Guises that the danger which now threatened them was even more serious than at the time of the Conspiracy of Amboise, and that the only means of assuring their safety was to revert to a policy of the most violent kind. If they did not crush their enemies, their enemies would infallibly crush them.

They took their measures with characteristic thoroughness. The Duc de Guise raised in Lorraine a regiment of *landsknechts* and 2,000 *reiters*; he recalled from Dauphiné the Gascon infantry which had been stationed there since the evacuation of Piedmont, and hastened the return of the French troops from Scotland. The venue of the States-General was then changed from Meaux to the strongly-fortified town of Orléans, in which, towards the middle of October, the Court took up its residence, and in and around which were quartered the bulk of the forces which the Duc de Guise had assembled. This army, "large enough to conquer Piedmont," was not too large for the purpose for which the Cardinal de Lorraine designed it. He had determined to crush, at one and the same time, the enemies of the Church and the enemies of the House of Guise, the Reformation and the Bourbons. At the opening of the States-General, the deputies would be invited to sign a profession of the Catholic faith, which would serve to reveal the suspected, the indifferent, the doubtful. The King would impose it on the cardinals, the prelates, the officers of the Crown, the magistrates, the nobles,

the gentry, on all his subjects. The laity who refused to sign this profession would, without form of trial, be degraded from all "their estates, dignities, and honours" and either sent to the stake or condemned to perpetual banishment; the clergy would be delivered over to the ecclesiastical judges. And this great display of force would be a sufficient indication that the King—or rather the Guises—had the means at their disposal to enforce obedience and to re-establish order and religious unity, by the extermination of heretics and rebels.

The destruction of the Bourbons, or, at any rate, of Condé, without whose support the vacillating King of Navarre would be a rival very little to be feared, was to be the first act of this drama. In accordance with this resolution, François II despatched one of his gentlemen to Nérac to inform the King of Navarre that during the past six months he had learned from different quarters that a conspiracy was on foot to turn his subjects from their allegiance, and that all reports agreed that the person who had undertaken "this fine enterprise" was none other than the Prince de Condé. And he invited Antoine de Bourbon to bring his brother to the Court to justify himself, "being able to assure you that, in case of his refusal to obey me, I shall be very well able to make him understand that I am King."

Antoine replied by indignantly repudiating the accusations against his brother, and by declaring that, if the latter's calumniators were content to be parties and not judges, he would bring Condé to the Court, with so small an escort that one would be obliged to recognise his innocence and his good intentions. Upon which the Guises, perceiving that they had committed an error in employing threats, changed their tactics, and, to draw their victims into the snare, despatched the weak and credulous Cardinal de Bourbon to his two brothers to assure them, in the name of the King, that



LOUIS I DE BOURBON, PRINCE DE CONDÉ.

nothing was contemplated against the life or liberty of either of them.

The Princes found themselves in a most difficult position. To refuse to obey was to proclaim themselves rebels and to give the signal for a general war. To go to the Court was to deliver themselves, bound hand and foot, into the power of their implacable enemies. The Princesse de Condé counselled her husband to choose revolt rather than so perilous a submission, telling him that "if she were a man and in his position, she would prefer to die sword in hand rather than offer her neck to the executioner's axe." But they had no pretext for calling their partisans to arms at the moment when the States-General was about to meet, and the King's subjects were to be permitted to expose their grievances, and a revolt would have stood no chance of success against the Guises, backed by the royal authority, established in the very centre of France and surrounded by a formidable army. It would be merely to repeat the disaster of the Connétable de Bourbon. Besides, the characters of the two brothers urged them equally to undertake this imprudent journey. The vanity and self-importance of the King of Navarre prevented him from appreciating the dangers of submission; he could not bring himself to believe that the Guises would venture to lay hands on so exalted a personage as himself, particularly after the assurances of safety which he had just received. The rashness of the Prince de Condé made him experience a kind of pleasure in venturing a second time into the midst of his enemies, and braving them under the eyes of the ladies of the Court.

The Princes accordingly set out for Orléans. On their arrival at Poitiers, its governor, the Sire de Montpezat, refused them permission to pass through the town. This apparent affront masked an indirect warning of the danger into which they were running, for the Queen-mother, anxious to save the Bourbons, as a necessary counterpoise to the Guises, had begged Montpezat

to endeavour to keep them away from Orléans, without compromising himself. The subterfuge was, however, of no avail, as the Guises, learning of what had occurred, hastened to send the Maréchal de Termes with excuses, and the Princes continued their journey. On October 31, they entered Orléans, as into a besieged town. No one came to meet them, except their two cousins, the Duc de Montpensier and the Prince de la Roche-sur-Yon, who did not dare to refuse this act of deference to the elder branch of their House, although they had abandoned its interests to attach themselves to the Guises. The King received Navarre and Condé with ominous coldness; the Queen-mother appeared very much moved and had tears in her eyes; "tears of a crocodile," says Regnier de la Planche, wherein he does Catherine an injustice, since, as we have shown, it was very far from her desire that harm should befall the Princes. The Guises were present, but, after saluting their intended victims, they retired, since they did not desire to figure openly in what was to follow, but to leave the apparent initiative to the King. Then the latter, who had his lesson by heart, informed Condé that he had sent for him to hear from his own lips what defence he had to offer to the charge that had been brought against him. Condé replied by fierce denunciations of the Guises, which the King interrupted by an order for his arrest; and he was conducted to a house near the convent of the Jacobins, which was immediately barred up, surrounded by soldiers, and transformed into a veritable Bastille. His wife, who, on learning of his arrest, had hastened to Orléans, was refused permission to see him, his attendants were withdrawn, and he was kept in solitary confinement.

The King of Navarre was not arrested, but the officers of his Household and the guards who had accompanied him from Nérac were taken away, and he was kept under the most rigid surveillance. In the hope of saving the life of his brother, he fawned upon the Guises, and

particularly upon the Cardinal de Lorraine, to whom, Brantôme says, he saw him speak "more often uncovered than covered."

The order for the arrest of Condé had been signed by the entire Council, with the exception of the instigators of this order themselves, who wished to be in a position to disclaim all official responsibility for it, shall the need arise. The Chancellor had signed among the rest, fearing to ruin everything by offering any resistance at this stage of the proceedings, though he was determined to do everything in his power to save the prince from the hands of his enemies.

Although, as a Prince of the Blood, it was Condé's undoubted privilege to be tried by the Grande Chambre of the Parlement of Paris, in which the Princes and peers sat, the King entrusted his examination to a commission of judges, presided over by Christophe de Thou, First President of the Parlement. Condé denied the competency of this tribunal and "appealed from the King ill-advised to the King better-advised." But his imprudence in accepting the services of two advocates gave a semblance of legality to the proceedings, and, his appeals and protests having been overruled by the Council, in which such was the fear inspired by the Guises that no one dared to utter a word in his defence, he was condemned "to lose his head on the scaffold."

It was at first considered probable that the King's clemency would be extended to his condemned kinsman, "in consideration of his youth," and every effort was made by the Princesse de Condé, the Châtillons, and other persons of high rank to secure a remission of the sentence. But nothing less than the death of their rival would satisfy the Guises, and though l'Hôpital, under the pretext of some legal flaw in the decree, succeeded in delaying the execution, it was finally fixed for December 10—the same day on which the States-General was to meet—and the scaffold on which it was to take place was erected before the royal lodging.

But, in gaining time, l'Hôpital had gained everything, for on November 16 the sickly young King had been taken ill at vespers, and in a few days his malady had assumed so grave a form that his physicians declared his recovery to be hopeless.

The consternation of the Guises may be imagined : for want of a few weeks, of a few days even, their triumph was escaping them ; the absolute power which they had exercised for eighteen months was slipping through their fingers, at the moment when they were about to render it indisputable by crushing all their enemies. The cardinal ordered public procession and prayers for the King's recovery ; the duke burst forth "into oaths and blasphemies" and threatened to have the royal physicians hanged.

Amidst the general confusion, Catherine retained her presence of mind. Compelled from the instinct of self-preservation to cling to the Guises, she had pretended to approve of the measures taken against the Bourbons, and had replied to all who had implored her to intervene on behalf of Condé : "It is my son's will." She had confined her efforts to protecting the King of Navarre, of whom contemporary writers are practically unanimous in declaring the Guises intended to rid themselves also, either by assassination or by some cleverly contrived "accident." But now, for the moment, she found herself mistress of the situation, and she did not fail to profit by her change of fortune.

The Guises played their last card. They proposed to the Queen-mother to hurry on the execution of the Prince de Condé and, it is said, to consent to the removal of the King of Navarre as well, promising in return to secure her the regency and to become its most faithful and devoted supporters. Catherine refused. She showed subsequently, at the time of the St. Bartholomew, that she was not the woman to recoil before a crime ; but, in this instance, she foresaw that the profit of the crime would not be hers. Her participation in it would

place her at the mercy of her accomplices ; and she knew the Guises too well to believe them capable of obeying after having commanded. Her interests enjoined her merely to limit the pretensions of Antoine de Bourbon while François II yet lived, and to assure to herself peaceable possession of the regency, by snatching a renunciation from the first Prince of the Blood. The feebleness of the King of Navarre promised her an easy task.

With the object of terrifying that prince, she accordingly caused an intimation to be conveyed to him that she was resolved to secure the regency, even at the price of the blood of the Bourbons. Then, when she considered him sufficiently convinced of her criminal intentions, she summoned him to her cabinet. He obeyed, believing his last hour had come. At the door, a lady stopped him to advise him, in a tremulous whisper, to accept everything that her Majesty might propose, or it was all over with him. He entered and found the Duc de Guise and the Cardinal de Lorraine with the Queen-mother. Catherine reproached him severely with the enterprises which he and his brother had undertaken against the State. He essayed to defend himself ; but she cut him short, telling him that denials were useless, in the face of such overwhelming proof, and that he had forfeited by his treasonable conduct all the rights that he might otherwise have advanced to the regency. The King of Navarre, while protesting his innocence, expressed his willingness to renounce the regency, even if the States-General should wish to confer it upon him. Catherine made him sign a declaration to that effect, and promised, in return for this surrender, that "he should be Lieutenant of the King in France, and that nothing should be ordered except by his advice and that of the other Princes of the Blood."

The future being thus regulated to her satisfaction, the Queen-mother wished to inaugurate her régime by a reconciliation. Without the slightest hesitation,

at the very moment when her son was dying, she imputed to him, and to him alone, the arrest of the Prince de Condé, and absolved the Guises from all responsibility. The pusillanimous Antoine accepted this explanation, and, at her bidding, embraced "his cousins," who the previous day had been conspiring to murder him.

Three days later, while Condé, whose courage had never once failed him, was calmly awaiting his fate, and actually playing cards with some of the officers who guarded him, one of his servants, who had been permitted to attend him, approached as though to pick up a fallen card, and whispered: "*Notre homme est croqué!*" Mastering his emotion, the prince finished his game, and then, taking the man aside, learned from him that an abscess which had formed in the King's ear had suddenly broken and that he had died in a few minutes. "God," wrote Calvin to Sturm, "struck the father in the eye, the son in the ear."

Scarcely had François drawn his last breath than the Constable, with whom, ever since the beginning of the King's illness, Catherine, resolved to leave nothing to chance, had been in secret communication, was hammering at the gates of Orléans, at the head of 800 gentlemen, and threatening the officers of the guard to have them hanged if they did not open to him on the instant. These officers, who, only a few hours before, had, in company with the rest of the garrison, assured the Duc de Guise that he might count upon them "to the last drop of their blood," did not dare to disobey the legal head of the Army. The Constable swaggered in, and the despotism of the Guises was at an end.

CHAPTER XVIII

Critical condition of the kingdom on the accession of Charles IX—Catherine de' Medici: her character and policy—Imprudence of the Reformers, who deliberately provoke persecution—Disturbances in Paris and in the South of France—Disgust of the Constable at the tolerant attitude of the Regent—He enters into an alliance with Guise and the Maréchal de Saint-André (the "Triumvirate") to combat Protestantism—Negotiations of the Guises with Philip II—"Edict of July" (1561)—The King of Navarre, seduced by the promises of Philip II, joins the Triumvirs—The Colloquy of Poissy—Progress of the Reformed doctrines at the Court—Increasing animosity between the two religions—Disgraceful riot in Paris—"Edict of January" (1562)—Unsuccessful efforts of the Guises to marry Mary Stuart to Don Carlos—They seek their chief support in the population of Paris—They endeavour to gain over the Lutheran princes of Germany, in order to isolate the French Protestants—Their interview with Duke Christopher of Würtemberg at Saverne—Massacre of Vassy.

THE despotism of the Guises was at an end; but, though no longer able to exploit the royal authority for their own purposes, they still possessed an immense influence, and, thanks to the circumstances that in eighteen short months they had succeeded in almost destroying the traditional reverence for the Crown, an incalculable power for mischief.

Never had the internal condition of France been more critical, never had she stood more in need of a strong and wise Government, than at the moment when the imaginary majority of François II was succeeded by the real minority of Charles IX. The danger which threatened her was no longer, as in the time of the last Sovereign of that name, a struggle between individual ambitions; private ambitions had now identified themselves with the living forces of the nation; the whole of the nobility and gentry were already engaged in the quarrel of the great factions which divided France, and

the mass of the people only awaited the signal to follow their example.

Such was the situation with which Catherine de' Medici was called upon to deal when, in the teeth of the rival factions, she took up the reins of government. She brought to the task a remarkable knowledge of men and of affairs—the fruit of long years of quiet study and observation—a boundless activity, an untiring vigilance, and a soul depraved by a life of subjection and dissimulation. All her life she had hungered for power and influence as a starving man hungers for bread, and, now that authority was in her hands, all her efforts were henceforth directed to safeguarding it and enabling her to remain the first—the only—personage in the State. Her master passion was to govern through her sons, and she dreaded every influence that might weaken by one iota her personal authority. In State ceremonies, she loved to be treated as on an equality with them; at the Estates of Orléans her seat was placed on the same level and under the same canopy as that of Charles IX. When, in 1567, she visited Metz, she desired to precede him into the town, with her own cortège of ladies and officers, in order not to be confounded with his suite. In fact, she governed during the whole reign of her second son, resumed the regency after his death, while awaiting the return of Henri III from Poland, and her influence may be traced in almost every act of his reign down to the time of her death.

By the majority of her contemporaries, particularly by those who viewed her only from a distance, Catherine is represented as a sinister figure, with little of the woman about her save her sex; a creature of Machiavellian subtlety, ambitious, cruel and unscrupulous. This estimate would seem to be in great part erroneous. Ambitious and unscrupulous she certainly was; but she was never cruel, except when it was impossible to gain her ends by other means. Violent measures were naturally alien to her character; when she struck, it was

because bribery, cajolery, and intimidation had failed. Nor was she, by any means, the profound politician which some would have us believe. The rapid changes of front, the shifty expedients, to which she so constantly resorted, so far from being part of any carefully-matured scheme, were, in most instances, the manœuvres of a timid, irresolute woman, anxious at all costs to escape from the difficulties of the moment and incapable of perceiving any but the immediate consequences of her actions.

If Catherine had really possessed the political sagacity sometimes ascribed to her, she would most certainly, on her assumption of the regency, have pursued the course suggested by l'Hôpital. This was to adopt a strictly neutral position, and, by the enforcement of toleration, of civil reform, and of justice, to raise the Crown above the region of controversy and prevent civil war. But the Queen only followed this advice so far as to avoid siding definitely with either party. She was incapable of any noble aim, while it is also probable that she failed to realise fully, at any rate, until matters had gone too far to be remedied, the gravity of the situation. "If one follows all her proceedings," writes Chateaubriand, "one perceives that, in the whole vast realm of which she was the Sovereign, she beheld only a larger Florence, the broils of her petty republic, the risings of one quarter of her native city against another, the quarrels between the Pazzi and the Medici, in the struggle between the Guises and the Châtillons." "To divide in order to reign," was the principle upon which she acted; to give a little encouragement to the Huguenots, to instil a little apprehension into the Catholics, and to accustom both parties to regard her as the dominant factor in the situation. The result was that she was distrusted by both alike, and hastened the very calamity she desired to avert.

And this calamity was rapidly approaching. Calvinism was not, as certain Protestant writers would have us

believe, a sect which demanded nothing but permission to worship God in its own way : it was violent, intolerant, propagandist. Thus, it deliberately provoked persecution and played into the hands of its most implacable enemies.

To give the Reformers an inch was to encourage them to take an ell. No edict authorised them to hold *prêches* and to assemble publicly together. But the favour of the King of Navarre and the Châtillons and the benevolence of the Regent emboldened them to practise openly their religion. In Paris, the stronghold of the Guises and of the most bigoted Catholicism, a band of Reformers renewed, to the singing of Psalms, the famous processions to the Pré-aux-Clercs. They were attacked by the students of the Sorbonne, chased through the streets with sticks and stones, and obliged to take refuge at the house of the Sire de Longjumeau. There they entrenched themselves and summoned their co-religionists to their aid. Reinforcements speedily arrived, and a murderous affray was only prevented by the timely appearance of the Provost of Paris and his archers. The Government banished Longjumeau, but directed the Parlement to punish all the disturbers of the peace, without distinction of religion. At Chinon, the Protestants assembled in troops of four to five hundred to assist at the *prêches* ; at Lectoure, on two successive Sundays, they, publicly and in arms, celebrated the Holy Sacrament according to the rites of Geneva. In the South, where passions were more violent, they returned the Catholics blow for blow. At Leyrolle, at Sérignac, at Brax, in the Agenais, they killed the parish priest and sacked the churches. A report was in circulation that at Lyons a Huguenot had cut off the arm of a priest who was bearing the Holy Sacrament. At Paris, they were credited with the intention of disturbing the solemn procession of the Corpus Christi, in which Catholics manifested with so much pomp their belief in the Real Presence ; and Catherine, greatly alarmed,

felt obliged to send for the Duc de Guise, whose popularity with the mob of Paris would, she calculated, enable him to restrain its ferocity in the event of the Protestants being so ill-advised as to provoke a disturbance.

The Regent maintained her attitude of toleration. At Fontainebleau, she allowed Coligny, Renée de France, Duchess of Ferrara, and the Princesse de Condé to transform their apartments into places of discussion and prayer. The Admiral brought from Geneva a celebrated Calvinist minister, Jean Raymond Merlin, and admitted to the *prêches* which were held in his apartments, not only the gentlemen of the Court, but the townsfolk. The Queen-mother courteously intimated to Merlin that she considered it undesirable for him to continue his sermons ; but she gave him no positive order, and they went on as before. One day in Holy Week, 1661, she took the young King and all the Court to hear the boldly-unorthodox Bishop of Valence preach in the *grande salle* of the château. Montbrun appears to have excelled himself on this occasion, attacking indirectly the authority of the Pope, and insisting on the necessity of praying to God in French and of placing the Scriptures in the vulgar tongue within reach of all. The Constable, who was present, was scandalised, and declared that "he was content with what he had heard, and should return no more."

Since the accession of Charles IX, indeed, Anne de Montmorency's attitude towards the two parties which divided the country had been sensibly modified. If during the despotism of the Guises he had secretly encouraged the Protestants who were conspiring against them, this had been due to his indignation at the latter's usurpation of the royal authority and the loss of the Grand Mastership, and in no sense to any sympathy with the religious views of the conspirators. Toleration of heresy, in point of fact, would have been a contradiction of his whole life, for, as we know, he was one of the most bigoted of Catholics. He believed that the

State could only be saved from anarchy by the unity of the Faith; and to this belief he was prepared to sacrifice his private animosities, his personal interests, even his family affections. All that he saw around revolted his religion. The Protestants were assembling in the Pré-aux-Clercs; their pastors were preaching openly; meat was being sold in Lent. The sermon of the Bishop of Valence filled up the measure of his indignation; and, on the morrow, swearing that he would sit no more at the feet of the Court preacher, he went to listen to a Jacobin monk who was preaching to the servants of the château. There he met Guise, the Duc de Montpensier, and the Maréchal de Saint-André, who had also decided upon this form of protest against the heterodox expositions of the Bishop of Valence.

On Easter Sunday, April 6, 1561, as the courtiers were on their way to the afternoon sermon, the Constable, Montpensier, Guise, and the Cardinal de Tournon, learning that the Bishop of Valence was to occupy the pulpit, retired to the private apartments of the cardinal, where the latter celebrated vespers. Then, after having been to make a violent remonstrance to the Queen, the Constable invited the Ducs de Montpensier and de Guise, Guise's eldest son the Prince de Joinville, the Cardinal de Tournon, and the Maréchal de Saint-André to sup with him. "And there," wrote Chantonay, the Spanish Ambassador, to Philip II, "they confederated and promised together to seek with one zeal, with one will, the remedy of religious affairs."

The Huguenots pretended that the three principal confederated nobles, Guise, Montmorency, and Saint-André, designated shortly afterwards by their adversaries under the name of Triumvirs, drew up forthwith a plan of war against the Bourbons. They even published a so-called *Sommaire des choses premièrement accordées pour la conspiration du triumvirat*, according to which the direction of affairs was to be remitted to Philip II, with whose aid Guise was to massacre the

Huguenots, beginning with the Bourbons. This was to be followed by a European war, in which the Catholic chiefs would invade Germany and crush Protestantism in that country.

This unrealisable project existed only in the frenzied imagination of the writer; nevertheless, this reconciliation of Guise and Montmorency, through the mediation of Saint-André, who acted as the common link between the two old rivals, composing any difficulties that arose and taking to himself the larger share of the profits of the association, was to have the most important consequences. "The Triumvirs of Catholicism," writes Henri Martin, "were not to occasion less carnage than the Triumvirs of ancient Rome; but in all this blood their own was to be mingled. This civil war which they invoked by the body and blood of Him Who has said that he who draws the sword shall perish by the sword was to devour them all three."

Immediately after the constitution of the Triumvirate, the Duc de Guise placed himself in direct relations with Philip II and posed before him as the leader of the French Catholics. At this period began the long series of letters exchanged between the Guises and the agents of Spain; the misunderstanding caused by the ill-advised claims to the throne of England which François II and Mary Stuart had put forward were forgotten; the duke became the confidant of Philip's Ambassador Chantonnay, proposed the union of all the princes of Christendom, denounced the culpable complaisance of the Queen-mother towards the Reformers, and expressed his approval of the cunning with which Philip was luring Antoine de Bourbon from the Protestants by the hope of the restoration of Spanish Navarre.

Elated by the support which the Guises and their allies were prepared to lend to the policy of his master, Chantonnay began to assume a haughty tone towards the Regent and "had threats of war continually in his mouth." Catherine, well aware of his secret relations

with the Duc de Guise, responded by drawing still closer to the party of Reform, and on April 19 an edict accorded to all the subjects of the King the liberty of worshipping freely with closed doors in their own houses. L'Hôpital, who distrusted the Parlement, in which during the last reign the orthodox party had been strongly reinforced, and whose most humane members considered the co-existence of the two religions as a political monstrosity, forestalled the remonstrance of the magistrates by sending it to the governors of provinces before submitting it to the Parlement. That body was extremely indignant, and even talked of summoning the Chancellor before it to answer for such an irregular proceeding.

The *Sacre* of Charles IX took place at Rheims on May 5, 1561, with the usual formalities, the Cardinal de Lorraine officiating, as he had done already for Henri II and François II. His Eminence did not allow the occasion to pass without uttering a solemn warning as to the danger of the path upon which the Government had entered, and exhorted the new King "to protect the Catholic Faith," predicting that "if he changed his sentiments, his destruction would be the result, and that whosoever counselled him to change his religion would, at the same time, snatch the Crown from his head."

The Regent, on the other hand, thought to consolidate it by toleration. But, unhappily, after liberty of conscience, the Protestants demanded liberty of worship. On June 10, the Sieur d'Esteray presented, in the name of his party, a request for permission to worship in "temples or other public buildings either already built or to be built at their expense." Further, the Protestants, in many places, celebrated only the rites of Geneva. On the complaint of the Clergy, the Regent decided to consult the Parlement, to which she joined the Princes and the members of the Privy Council, and, after several deliberations, this "great company" pronounced, by

a majority of three votes, against all exercise, public or private, of the New Religion.

In accordance with the advice of the assembly, the cardinal drew up an edict known as the "Edict of July," which forbade, "under confiscation of body and goods," conventicles public or private, whether the worshippers attended "with arms or without arms," when there was preaching or administration of the Sacraments in any other form than in accordance with the established custom of the Catholic Church. This prohibition was, however, tempered by provisions which warned the magistrates against excess of zeal, and enacted the severest penalties against false informers or those who in any way molested the Reformers in their houses. Thus, its effect was practically nullified, and Coligny's chaplain wrote to the Protestant churches that "the least powerful amongst them might be assured of enjoying the preaching of the word of God in their houses or that of their neighbours."

Meanwhile, the King of Navarre had been affording the spectacle of the most extraordinary religious tergiversations. In April, he had communicated devoutly; in June, he became a Protestant; in August, he returned ostentatiously to Mass, and, shortly afterwards, allured by what De Thou calls "the entertainment of hopes" dangled before his eyes by Philip II, he renounced his family ties and his old hostility to the Guises and joined the Triumvirs. On the other hand, his masterful wife, Jeanne d'Albret, had definitely espoused the cause of Reform. At the beginning of August, she set out for the Court, and on her way restored the places of worship to her co-religionists in those towns in which the magistrates had sought to apply the Edict of July. Her passing through Paris was made the occasion of a great religious demonstration, in which 15,000 Protestants from all parts of the Île-de-France took part, and on her arrival at Saint-Germain she was received with great honours.

During the latter part of the year 1561, indeed, the Court was obviously rallying to the side of the Reformers, for the King of Navarre's accession to the Triumvirate had given the latter such a predominance that Catherine felt obliged to seek a counterpoise. It was with her warm approval that the Colloquy of Poissy—a conference between the principal prelates of France and the delegates of the Reformed churches—was held, in the hope of arriving at some settlement of the chief differences between the two religions. The latitudinarian Prince de la Roche-sur-Yon was appointed the young King's *gouverneur*; Andelot, most stalwart of Huguenots, was admitted to the Council; the Regent refused to listen to Chantonnay when he waited upon her to accuse Coligny of preparing a filibustering expedition against the Spanish colonies; and when Anne de Montmorency threatened to leave the Court, informed him that he might depart if he wished.

It was during these months that Huguenotism reached its flood-tide, and made its supreme effort to conquer France and to found a new national Protestant Church. "Its progress under this régime of semi-toleration was enormous. The contempt for a corrupt clergy and a debased religion, the attraction of novelty, the desire to drink at the living sources of the Word of God, had made many proselytes; the aristocracy was invaded; politics and fashion intermingled. The hatred of the Guises had brought about a crowd of conversions which, without being very sincere or very profound, made an impression and provoked others. The curé of Provins, Claude Haton, estimates wrongly the Protestants at a quarter of the population; the Venetian Ambassador also exaggerates their number. But there were Huguenots in every province and in every class. While the first National Synod, which met in Paris in May 1557, had, according to the highest calculations, represented only seventy-two churches, Coligny, at the time of the Assembly of Fontainebleau, counted 50,000

Reformers in Normandy ; finally, at the moment of the Colloquy of Poissy, the Prince de Condé spoke in the name of 2,550 churches. In many places the faithful were without a pastor. The Spirit of God and the spirit of party had changed the face of the realm.”¹

The Court itself was the centre of the struggle. High-born dames, like René de France, Duchess of Ferrara, Jacqueline de Rohan, the Princesse de Porcien, and the Comtesses de Mailly and de la Rochefoucauld, exerted all the influence at their command to make converts. Théodore de Bèze and other eminent divines expounded Calvinistic doctrines in the lodgings of Coligny and Condé to congregations largely composed of Catholics. The younger members of the Court, particularly the ladies, began to manifest a decided taste for the new heterodox works, and took pleasure in reading the Holy Scriptures in French and in singing the Psalms of Marot. “The number and boldness of the Protestants increase daily,” wrote Languet, “and the Catholics seemed to be disheartened little by little.” Fashion, ever so powerful in France, was probably no stranger to the progress of Protestantism. “It is with a morbid justice,” remarks M. de Saint-Poncy, that President Hénault observes that, “in seeking the true cause of the progress of the Reformation in different countries, one finds that in Germany it was interest,² in England love,³ and in France novelty.”⁴

Marguerite de Valois—the celebrated Queen Margot—in her *Mémoires*, casts a curious light upon the trend of opinion in Court circles at this period, and shows us the aristocratic enthusiasts for the latest fashionable craze carrying their zeal so far as to endeavour to make proselytes by means more forcible than persuasive. It is singular to find at the head of this band of missionaries

¹ M. Jean Mariéjol, in Lavissee, *Histoire de France*.

² The desire of the minor princes of Germany to enrich themselves with the spoils of the Church.

³ The love of Henri VIII for Anne Boleyn.

⁴ Count Léo de Saint-Poncy, *Histoire de Marguerite de Valois*.

her brother, the Duc d'Anjou, one of the chief instigators of the Massacre of St. Bartholomew.

"Then, again," she says, "is the resistance I made in order to remain faithful to my religion, at the time of the Colloquy of Poissy (when the whole Court was infected with heresy), to the arbitrary persuasions of several lords and ladies of the Court, and even to those of my brother of Anjou, since King of France, whose inexperience had prevented him from escaping the influence of that wretched Huguenoterie; and who never ceased conjuring me to change my religion, very often throwing my Book of Hours into the fire and giving me, in its stead, Huguenot songs and prayers, which I used to hand over at once to Madame de Curtin, my *gouvernante*, whom God had done me the favour to keep Catholic, and who would often take me to M. le Cardinal de Tournon, who advised and strengthened me in the suffering of all things for the maintenance of my religion, and gave me prayer-books and rosaries, in the place of those which had been burned by my brother of Anjou. But when others of his intimate friends who were bent upon my destruction discovered that those were once more in my possession, they reviled me angrily, saying that it was youth and stupidity which caused me to act thus; that it was easy to see that I was possessed of no understanding; that all intelligent people, whatever their age or sex, hearing the doctrine of Charity preached, had freed themselves from the trammels of bigotry, but that I should become as foolish as my *gouvernante*. And my brother of Anjou adding threats thereunto, declared that the Queen, my mother, would have me whipped. He said this, however, upon his own responsibility, for the Queen, my mother, was ignorant of the error into which he had fallen, and when she became aware of it, she reproved him and his tutors as well, and, after having them instructed, induced them to return to the true, holy, and ancient faith of our fathers, from which she had never departed. I used

to say, in answer to these threats, melting to tears—as seven or eight, the age I was then, is a somewhat sensitive period—that they might have me whipped or killed if they liked, but that I would endure anything that could be done to me rather than bring about my own damnation.”¹

It may here be observed that this fascinating princess, of whom we shall have a good deal to say presently, remained down to the day of her death a most devout Catholic—that is to say, in the sense of being a rigid observer of the forms and ceremonies of her Church—a practice which was not in those days, nor indeed, down to a very much later period, held to be incompatible with the most irregular of lives.

The Colloquy of Poissy, from which so much had been hoped, served no purpose save to demonstrate how irreconcilable were the differences which divided the two religions, and, after three months of argument and recrimination, and at last of mere invective and abuse, it was dissolved; party feeling became more and more embittered; sanguinary affrays were of almost daily occurrence. It seemed hopeless to expect the two religions to live together in even a pretence of harmony. All the South was on fire; the royal officers and the magistrates themselves took sides with the contending factions instead of endeavouring to restrain them. At Carcassonne, at Cahors, at Grenade, in Provence, the Catholics massacred the Protestants. At Montauban, at Montpellier, at Nîmes, and other places in Languedoc, where the Huguenots were in the majority, they drove away, and sometimes killed, the priests and monks, broke the images, burned the sacred vessels, and suspended the Catholic worship. In Guienne, the movement assumed a character less fanatical and more political than in Languedoc; there in the secret conclaves of the nobility and Huguenot *bourgeoisie*, if one may believe Blaise de Montluc, they did not fear to debate the

¹ *Mémoires et Lettres de Marguerite de Valois* (édit. Guessard, 1842).

deposition of the Valois and the elevation of "a King of the faithful," who would have been the Prince de Condé. In Paris, the Catholic party took up an attitude as seditious as the Huguenot party in Guienne; the clergy were exasperated against the Queen-mother and the Chancellor; a bachelor of the Collège d'Harcourt, named Jean Tanquerel, sustained publicly a thesis on "the right of the Pope to depose kings and emperors who favoured heresy"; other factious ecclesiastics talked openly of soliciting foreign intervention, and Philip II did not conceal from the French Ambassador at Madrid that he had received many such requests from "the faithful of France," and that "he would defend them in such great need."

The smouldering hatred between the two parties culminated in the last days of December in a most disgraceful riot. The Protestants, being assembled at the house of the patriarch, the curé of the neighbouring church of Saint-Médard had all the bells set pealing, in order to drown the voice of the preacher. The Huguenots sent two of their number to beg the priests to cease this clamour; the latter replied by killing one of the messengers; the other escaped and hurried back to demand vengeance. The Protestants, sword in hand, attacked the church; the clergy and their parishioners barricaded the doors, but, with the assistance of the watch, who, instead of attempting to keep order, took their part, the Huguenots forced their way in. The images were broken, the Holy Sacrament profaned, many of the Catholics wounded, while a number of them, including the priests, were carried away as prisoners to the Châtelet by the archers, as aggressors and authors of the disturbance. Next day, the people of Saint-Médard revenged themselves by attempting to set fire to the patriarch's house; but were charged by a band of mounted Huguenots and dispersed.

In January 1562, the Regent summoned delegates from each of the eight Parlements in France to Saint-

Germain to deliberate on the means of stemming the fast-rising tide of hatred which was threatening to engulf the country. This assembly was of opinion that liberty of meeting should be accorded to the Protestants, but that they should be refused the right to build places of worship in the towns. Upon this, the Chancellor drew up the "Edict of January" (January 17, 1562) which granted the Reformers freedom of worship outside walled towns, and which even within the towns permitted them to hold meetings in private houses. It was the last stage of an evolution which, in its rapid course, had hurried along the Chancellor and the Queen from simple and compassionate tolerance to an almost absolute recognition of liberty of worship. In one year, the Reformers had passed from the régime of tolerance to the quasi-enjoyment of the common right. Further, this edict remained dear to them as the charter of their enfranchisement, and they did not cease, during the persecutions and civil wars, to demand its re-establishment.

The edict was intended by l'Hôpital to be a temporary expedient, to compel the members of the two religions to live peaceably together under the protection of the law until some lasting compromise could be effected. Unfortunately, it did not go far enough to satisfy the majority of the Huguenots, whose hopes had been raised to an extravagant pitch, while it excited the violent opposition of the Catholics, and may be said to have given the signal for civil war.

We have seen how, in the spring of 1561, the Constable, the Duc de Guise, and the Maréchal de Saint-André, alarmed at the progress of the Reformed religion and the liberal policy of the Regent, had combined together to oppose the Protestants and the Government, which they regarded as their dupes or accomplices.

Although there is little or no truth in the fantastic projects which the pamphlet of which we have spoken

elsewhere credits the Triumvirs, it is certain that they entered into close relations with both Rome and Spain. Montmorency charged the Comte de Rambouillet to assure the Pope of his great piety and devotion towards God and the Holy See; and Pius IV, in his reply, declared his conviction that the "authority and good-will of the Constable" would prevail over the perverse intentions of the enemies of God (June 1561). At the same moment, the Pope exhorted Charles IX "to spare neither fire nor sword" against heresy.

Meantime, the Guises, in order to render more intimate their union with Spain, undertook to marry their niece, Mary Stuart, to Don Carlos, the heir to the crown of Spain. The young widow of François II was then living at Rheims, near her uncle, the Cardinal de Lorraine, who had retired to his archiepiscopal see on his dismissal from office, which had followed the death of the late King; and she would not appear to have been averse to a marriage which would have saved her from being exiled to her turbulent realm beyond the seas. Catherine, who dreamed of marrying her second daughter, Madame Marguerite, to Don Carlos, employed all the influence of that princess's elder sister over Philip II to prevent this union; but the negotiations were prolonged for several months, and were not even interrupted by Mary Stuart's departure for Scotland. It is probable, however, that neither the counsels of Élisabeth of Spain nor the representations of Elizabeth of England would have succeeded in turning Philip II from an alliance which would have given his heir, not only the crown of Scotland, but a claim to that of England, if other motives had not contributed to dissuade him from agreeing to it. Perhaps, as an historian of the Guises suggests, he feared the influence which the charms of Mary Stuart and the craftiness of the Cardinal de Lorraine might exercise over Don Carlos; perhaps, he considered that vassals such as the Guises would be more useful in the dominions of the King of France than in his own, and

that to give such uncles to his son was to give himself subjects too dangerous. Any way, these negotiations reflect little credit on the Guises, and demonstrate once more the readiness with which they were prepared to sacrifice the interests of France to that of their House. Just as they had persuaded François II and Mary Stuart to assume the titles of King and Queen of England at the risk of a ruinous war, so now they were offering the same rights and the same titles to the most bitter enemy of France.

Spain, however, was for the Guises merely an ally ; it was in France, and, more particularly, in the population of Paris, that they sought their real fulcrum. "We have seen at all periods," observes M. Forneron, "the fascination exercised over the most practical geniuses, and even over the most sceptical minds, by the plaudits of the idlers of a great town. The first Duc de Guise had passed his life in courting the citizens of Paris ; he was regarded as their general. "*Le Balafré*," who had exhausted all the joyous sensations which the enthusiastic cries of soldiers might be able to give him, still found pleasure in the crowds of Parisians who rushed from their shops, blocked the streets, mounted to the roofs to cheer him, every time that he showed himself to them in solemn entries. He saw, besides, in these rather theatrical ceremonies a means of recalling himself to the recollection of the gossips of the capital, and of combating the rival influence which the Montmorencies were seeking to establish in Paris.

And, on these occasions, he neglected nothing to impress the imagination of the Parisians and increase his popularity. When Catherine had imprudently sent for him at the time of the Feast of Corpus Christi, which it was feared that the Huguenots intended to interrupt, he had come accompanied by 400 armed gentlemen, and clad in doublet and hose of crimson satin, and a cloak and cap of black velvet with a red plume, and, mounted on a splendid black horse, with trappings of

black velvet embroidered with silver, had ridden bowing and smiling through the streets, while the shouts of "*Vive Guise!*" thundered to heaven. On that day, François de Lorraine was the veritable King of Paris.

Immediately after the termination of the Colloquy of Poissy, Guise quitted the Court. It was one of those momentary disappearances which he considered sometimes useful to his plans. He retired to Lorraine and neglected for a time the interests of the Triumvirate, in order to show himself the more necessary to his incapable associates and to await some opportunity for making a theatrical re-entry upon the scene. He hoped, too, that, in his absence, Catherine would compromise herself more deeply and would make to the Protestants concessions which she would perhaps be reluctant to make while he remained at Court. In point of fact, the duke's menacing presence removed, the Regent gave her consent to the "Edict of January," which excited the Catholics to such a degree of exasperation that the Constable and Saint-André wrote in all haste to Guise to return to Paris, make a triumphal entry, and oppose to the authority of Catherine their united forces.

Guise did not immediately respond to the summons. He and the Cardinal de Lorraine had resolved to gain over the Lutheran princes of Germany, whose territories lay nearest the frontier, in order to isolate the French Protestants and deprive them of all external sympathy and assistance. It was the same policy which had, some years before, inspired the Cardinal de Lorraine with the idea of convoking the theologians of the Confession of Augsburg to oppose them to the ministers of Geneva. No prince had greater influence among the German Protestants, by his character and family connections, than Duke Christopher of Würtemberg, and in the preceding summer Guise had written to him, to place him on his guard against the persons who "make no more account of your confession and ecclesiastical

ritual than that of the Pope," and to demand of him, on matters of religion, "a counsel which he knew could not be otherwise than honest and virtuous." The Duke of Würtemberg, flattered by these advances and compliments, sent copies, in Latin and French, of the Confession of Augsburg, and Guise declared himself satisfied that the articles touching the Holy Eucharist contained little of the doctrine of Geneva. He posed as a man desirous of receiving instruction, and, without disguising his attachment to the Church of Rome, professed himself very willing to listen to the doctors of another opinion.

The Duke of Würtemberg, deceived by this comedy, consented to an interview, and even expressed the desire that the Cardinal de Lorraine should assist at it. It took place at Saverne, in the States of the Bishop of Strasbourg on February 15, 1562 and the three following days. Both Guise and his brother were prodigal of flattery and caresses. They listened with the most profound respect to the arguments of the Lutheran theologians, and pronounced them reasonable, nay, convincing. Guise said that he was only a rough soldier and did not profess to understand such things, but it seemed to him that he was a Lutheran. The cardinal declared that he would as soon pray in a black gown as a red. Both thanked God that they never had, and swore that they never would, put any man to death on account of his religion. They acted, in fact, so skilfully that the German prince felt that there were good hopes of being able to bring France to accept, at any rate, a modified form of the Lutheran creed, and was almost persuaded that the Colloquy had failed through the unconciliatory attitude of the Calvinists, whom, the Guises insisted, were seditious politicians and not religious men.

The two brothers departed, convinced that they had completely duped the Germans and deprived the Huguenots of all chance of assistance from beyond the Rhine, and proceeded to keep their word to the Duke of Würtemberg, as they passed through Saint-Nicolas

in Lorraine, by ordering an artisan who had just had his child baptized according to the rites of the Reformed religion to be hanged. From there they proceeded to Joinville, to visit their mother, Antoinette de Bourbon, and to fetch Anne d'Este and her children, after which they set out for Paris. On their way, they passed, with the duke's great retinue of soldiers, gentlemen, and servants, through the little town of Vassy, a few leagues distant from Joinville. It was a Sunday (March 1), and they made a halt to hear Mass. The church was "within arquebus range" of a barn, where the Reformers of the town and the environs were holding their *prêche*; for, although Vassy was a walled town, they had established a "temple" there, contrary to the "Edict of January." Their community, although it had only been in existence a year, was a numerous and ardent one. Some months before, the Bishop of Châlons, Jérôme Bourgeois, who had come to admonish them to live in a Catholic way, had been publicly confuted by the pastor and forced to beat an ignominious retreat, amidst cries of: *Au loup! au renard!* Antoinette de Bourbon, who passed the greater part of her time at the Château of Joinville, was indignant at the existence of a nest of heretics so near her own residence, in a town which formed part of the dowry of her granddaughter, Mary Stuart; but her vassals themselves attended the *prêche* at Vassy. The Duc de Guise had prudently decided only to remain in the town long enough to hear Mass, "desiring," said he, "to avoid the risk of any of my people bandying words with those of the said town, and entering into a dispute on the subject of religion."

He had just entered the church when word was brought him that the Reformers, to the number of 500 or more, were about to hold their *prêche*. These "scandalous, arrogant, and very rash persons" were for the most part his own vassals, and he considered it his duty to go and remonstrate with them on their insolent infringement of the law under the eyes of their lord.

On his death-bed, he emphatically denied having premeditated anything further, and there can be no doubt that he spoke the truth.

Unhappily, one of Guise's equerries, a hot-headed young man named La Brosse, and some gentlemen and lackeys, preceded their master and entered the barn. The Protestants, irritated at the sight of these intruders, who, to do them justice, appear to have been actuated merely by curiosity, ordered them rudely to leave the place. They refused, whereupon the congregation fell upon them and forcibly ejected them.

The Protestants then barricaded the door of the barn, while some of them stationed themselves on a scaffolding above the entrance, where they had stored a quantity of stones, and threw them at Guise and his companions, whom they saw approaching. Several of the duke's gentlemen were hit, and he himself received a blow on the head. He lost his temper, and, if he did not actually direct, certainly did nothing to restrain his escort, who, after replying to the stones with a volley of arquebus-shots, forced the door and threw themselves upon the congregation. Some of the Protestants tried to escape by the roof, where they were shot down like pigeons; while those who succeeded in gaining the door had to make their way through a double line of soldiers and servants, who struck at them fiercely. When Guise at last stopped the carnage, at least a score of persons of both sexes had been killed and three times that number more or less seriously wounded. Some authorities place the casualties at a much higher figure.

CHAPTER XIX

Effects of the Massacre of Vassy—The Triumvirs and Condé enter Paris, in which two hostile camps are formed—Attitude of Catherine de' Medici—Her letters to Condé—The Triumvirs forestall Condé and secure the persons of the young King and the Regent—Catherine accepts the situation and assumes the direction of the Catholic party—The Huguenot ride to Orléans—The First War of Religion begins—Ferocity of the Catholics—Atrocious vandalism of the Protestants—Fortune at first inclines towards the latter, but the superior resources of the Catholics soon enable them to secure the upper hand—The Reformers appeal to Elizabeth for assistance—Treaty of Hampton Court—Disinterested and patriotic offer of Guise rejected by Condé—Guise lays siege to Rouen—He causes his English prisoners to be hanged as filibusters—Gallant defence of Fort Sainte-Catherine—Rouen is taken by storm and sacked—Death of the King of Navarre—Huguenot epitaph upon him.

THE news of the Massacre of Vassy aroused a perfect tempest of indignation amongst the Protestants and a ferocious joy amongst their enemies. While Guise, fearing that this "accident," as he described it in a letter to the Duke of Würtemberg, might compromise the results of the interview of Saverne, strove to throw the blame upon his victims, the Catholic preachers glorified the slaughter of the heretics. They justified it by the example of Moses, who had caused the worshippers of the golden calf to be slain, and of Jehu, whose godly fear had put to the sword two kings and 1,200 princes, and cast out Queen Jezebel to be eaten by the dogs. On the other hand, Théodore de Bèze, the most eminent as well as the most courtly of the Protestant divines, presented himself at Fontainebleau, where the King and the Queen-mother were then residing, to demand justice upon the *massacreur* of Vassy. The Prince de Condé, now the acknowledged leader of the Huguenots, vehemently supported this demand,

and offered Catherine 50,000 men, in the name of the Reformers. The King of Navarre declared, on the contrary, that "whoever should touch as much as the finger-tip of his brother of Guise would touch his [Navarre's] whole body." He appeared to have completely forgotten that this same "brother of Guise" had recently been conspiring to cut his throat. He spoke very harshly to Bèze, and reproached him with desiring to foment civil war. "Sire," replied the divine, "it is true that it is for the Church of God to receive rather than to give blows; but, remember, it is an anvil which has worn out many a hammer."

The crisis so long dreaded by all moderate men was rapidly approaching. Catherine, without declaring her intentions, determined to prevent the reunion of the Catholic chiefs. Accordingly, she wrote to Guise, ordering him to join her "*peu accompagné*" at Monceaux, in Brie, whither she proceeded with the young King, and, at the same time, sent orders to the Maréchal de Saint-André, who was in Paris, to retire to his government. Both declined to obey, and on March 13 the Triumvirs met at Guise's Château of Nanteuil.

Three days later, Guise, escorted by the Constable and Saint-André, and followed by a body of cavalry, which the English Ambassador, Throckmorton, estimates at 3,000 men, with the young Prince de Joinville and the two eldest sons of Montmorency riding at their head, made a triumphal entry into Paris by the Porte Saint-Denis. The people welcomed him "as though he had been sent by God, and cried as he passed along the streets, '*Vive Guise!*' as they cry, '*Vive le Roi!*' when the King comes." The Provost of the Merchants, who awaited him at the Hôtel de Ville, offered him, in the name of the town, 20,000 men and 2,000,000 écus "to pacify the realm"; to which the duke modestly replied that that was the affair of the King of Navarre and of the Queen-mother, and that, as a subject of the King, his honour required him to obey them. It was a

veritable occupation of the capital, and for the first time the historian De Thou applies to the three Catholic chiefs the name of Triumvirs.

On the same day, and almost at the same hour as Guise made his entry into Paris, the Prince de Condé also entered, but by a different gate; and, as the duke was returning from the Hôtel de Ville, he met the prince, who was accompanied, like himself, by a strong escort. For a moment it seemed as though a sanguinary affray might break out; but, though the glances of their respective followers crossed like sword-blades, the rival chiefs saluted each other with all due courtesy, and passed on.

There were now in Paris two hostile camps, as in the time of the Bourguignons and Armagnacs, which were every day being reinforced by the arrival of gentlemen from the provinces, eager to offer their services to the Triumvirs or Condé. Every day people feared a battle in the very streets of the town.

Catherine de' Medici, however, did not despair of escaping from this crisis by means of a compromise. She nominated the Cardinal de Bourbon, who, as a Prince of the Blood and a Catholic, was acceptable to both parties, Governor of Paris. This mediator, after a consultation with the Presidents of the Parlement, decided that both Guise and Condé should leave Paris. But the Provost of the Merchants begged the duke not to abandon the town; and both Guise and Condé remained.

On the 21st, the King of Navarre, the Lieutenant-General of the Kingdom, abandoning the King and the Regent, rejoined the Triumvirs in Paris, and lodged with the Constable at the Hôtel de Montmorency, Rue Vieille du Temple. On the following morning, which was that of Palm Sunday, a long procession set out from the Hôtel de Montmorency to the Church of Sainte-Geneviève. Escorted by his new allies, Antoine de Bourbon walked in it, a palm-branch in his hand, in



CATHERINE DE' MEDICI.

From an engraving by Desrochers.

order to show to all Paris his devotion to the Catholic religion and his attachment to the Lorraine princes. About the same hour, his brother the Prince de Condé, pistol in hand and accompanied by 500 gentlemen on horseback, might have been seen escorting the Huguenot pastors through the midst of a howling mob to the *prêche* at Charenton.

The Regent was still at Fontainebleau, with the young King. The fears with which the Triumvirs inspired her, and perhaps also some disinterested sympathies, impelled her towards Condé and the Huguenots, and between the 16th and the 24th she wrote the prince four letters recommending to him "the mother, the children, and the kingdom." "I shall never forget," she wrote, "what you do for me, and, if I die before having the opportunity of recognising it as I should have wished, I will leave my instructions to my children." Most unhappily for himself and his party, however, Condé allowed this splendid opportunity of placing the royal authority on his side to escape him. Forced to leave Paris (March 23), where he recognised the impossibility of maintaining himself against a fanatical population, he ought to have marched straight upon Fontainebleau, have carried off the King and the Regent, and conducted them into the Huguenot country beyond the Loire. The prestige of the royal authority would then have legalised, in the eyes of the many who were still hesitating which cause to espouse, the taking up of arms by the Reformers; the High Catholic party would have been the "rebels," and their chiefs would have probably been forced to come to terms. But, either because he hoped that Catherine would come, voluntarily, to place herself under his protection, and wished to avoid all appearance of constraining her, or because he did not realise that possession of the King's person was worth "half of France," he proceeded, not to Fontainebleau, but to Meaux, where he summoned to his banner the Huguenot nobility of the neighbouring

provinces, issued a circular letter to the Reformed churches, calling upon them to prepare to defend themselves, and contented himself by sending a gentleman to the Regent "to ascertain her will."

Condé's rivals hastened to profit by the prince's delay. On March 27, the King of Navarre and the Triumvirs proceeded to Fontainebleau, accompanied by a body of a thousand cavalry, and invited the Regent to return to Paris. Catherine, encouraged by l'Hôpital, resisted several days, but when the news arrived that Condé had quitted Meaux and was approaching Paris, Antoine de Bourbon informed her that he and his allies had decided to take charge of the King and his brothers, from fear lest the Huguenots should seize their persons; that, as for her Majesty, she was free to follow her sons or not as she pleased. Catherine yielded, according to her custom, and the captive Court took the road to Paris, the Regent weeping with rage. But, as Guise observed: "An advantage whether it be gained by love or by force, does not cease to be an advantage."

Catherine wasted no time in regrets. It was the fault of the Protestants if she were the prisoner of the Catholics, and she turned promptly towards the victors. The letters she had written to Condé were certainly very embarrassing; but she endeavoured to prove that they had not the sense which they appeared to have. Strong in this correspondence, copies of which he despatched to the German Protestant Princes and to the Emperor Ferdinand, Condé maintained that the King and the Regent were prisoners and were not free agents. Catherine hastened to turn the argument against the Huguenots, whom, she declared: "I must believe, are retaining, against his wish, my cousin the Prince de Condé . . . to give more authority to their action." She and her son, she continued, were perfectly free, and, if there were any prisoners, they were "the said princes and lords [the Triumvirs], whom the King my son and I hold so devoted to the advantage of this

crown that I see them ready to sacrifice themselves for its preservation." After such declarations, it was, of course, impossible for the Triumvirs to keep Catherine on one side. In their own interests, indeed, as in that of their cause, it behoved them to gain the mother of the King, and, for that purpose, they were obliged to restore the authority to her. Thus, she gained all the advantages that were to be derived from her enforced change of front, and assumed the direction of the Catholic party.

Foiled in his hopes of getting possession of the person of the King, Condé, who had now been joined by Coligny, turned southwards, with the intention of occupying Orléans, a place which, on account of its central position, would serve as an admirable base for his operations, and, to some extent, counterbalance the advantage which the Triumvirs derived from the possession of the capital.

On reaching Artinay, six leagues from Orléans, on the morning of April 2, he learned that Andelot, with a handful of men, had seized one of the gates of the town, and was holding it against the garrison and a part of the citizens. "He had with him," says La Noue, "about 2,000 gentlemen and their valets, and, putting himself at their head, he set off at full gallop for the gate and the whole pack after him. Baggage, horses and men fell and rolled over in the dust, without any one attempting to draw rein, amid shouts of laughter from the reckless cavalcade, and to the great astonishment of peaceable travellers, who, ignorant that hostilities had broken out, asked one another if it were 'an assembly of all the madmen in France.'" But the "madmen" swept along on their headlong course, and before noon had sounded from the clock of Orléans, they were masters of the town and "of the taps of the most delicious wines in France."

"Under these joyous auspices," observes Henri Martin, "began the most horrible civil war of modern times";

and unhappy France became the scene of a frightful orgy of massacre, rape, and pillage. At Sens, Moulins, Angers, and other towns where the Catholics predominated the scenes of Vassy were repeated, often on a much larger scale, and with additional atrocities, and the Huguenots were beaten to death, hanged, drowned, broken on the wheel, or decapitated. The Protestants, less barbarous, in general, than their adversaries towards men, though in many places where they held the upper hand the monks and priests received very short shrift, were implacable in their rage against what they regarded as the monuments of idolatry. The work of devastation which was to despoil France of so much of that antique ornamentation which modern ages have known so well how to destroy, but have not yet known how to replace, began at Orléans, where the soldiers of Condé's army and the Protestant citizens invaded the churches, broke the statues, overturned the altars, and burned the pulpits and the wainscoting. Condé and Coligny hastened to the cathedral and made every effort to restrain the frenzy of their co-religionists. It was to no purpose; entreaties, threats, blows, alike were useless. Condé picked up an arquebus and levelled it at a man who was preparing to throw down a statue from its niche.

"Monsieur," cried the fanatic, "have patience until I have cast down this idol. You can kill me afterwards." Whereupon, Bèze tells us, the chiefs recognised the finger of God and allowed the work of destruction to be completed.

This atrocious vandalism was imitated in every town in which the Protestants were the masters; the sound of the axe was heard from one end of France to the other; "what had been built in four centuries was destroyed in a single day." "The pomp of Catholic ceremonies, the decorations of the altar, the Christs bleeding and crowned with thorns, the saints represented in their trials and in their triumph, all those spectacles, all those enchantments of the imagination and of the

eyes appeared a remnant of Paganism, an idolatry, to the disciples of Calvin," and no sooner did a town fall into their hands than they flung themselves upon the churches like famished wolves upon their quarry. The day of their entry into Bourges, the arquebusiers of Montgomery—the involuntary slayer of Henri II—riddled with bullets the beautiful portal of the Church of Saint-Étienne, on which was represented the scene of the Last Judgment. The splendid choir of Saint-Jean de Lyon, "constructed of marble, with columns of jasper and porphyry," was completely ruined; the venerable basilicas of Saint-Just and Saint-Irénée were demolished, the crucifixes and statues of the Blessed Virgin which they contained being dragged in the mud and the baptismal fonts degraded to the vilest purposes; the shrines, pyxes, and chalices were melted down and the bells converted into cannon.

After having trampled underfoot the objects of worship and destroyed the products of human genius, the Huguenots turned their wrath against the dead. To demonstrate their disbelief in Purgatory and their condemnation of prayers for the departed, they proceeded to destroy sepulchres, and violated the graves, not only of the saints, but of sovereigns and celebrated personages. At Vendôme, the monuments of the Bourbons-Vendôme, ancestors of their own leader Condé, at Angoulême, the sepulchres of the Valois, ancestors of the reigning House, were destroyed and the remains they contained desecrated. At Cléry, out of hatred for the famous pilgrimage of Notre-Dame de Cléry, the grave of Louis XI was broken open and his bones burned, together with those of the Ducs de Longueville, descendants of the great Dunois. At Sainte-Croix d'Orléans, they burned the heart of the late King, François II; at Bourges, they desecrated the remains of Jeanne de France, the repudiated wife of Louis XII; at Rouen, they sacked the tombs of Rollo, of Guillaume Longue-Epée and of Richard Cœur-de-Lion; at Caen, they

destroyed the sepulchres of William the Conqueror and his queen Matilda, in the two basilicas in which the Conqueror and his wife had caused to be constructed as immense mausoleum to shelter their remains. They forced the priests, by threats, sometimes even by torture, to deliver up the relics which they endeavoured to conceal from their outrage. "No name was so respected, no souvenir so national, as to protect these ancient remains, which expiated so pitilessly the superstitious exaggeration of the homage which had been rendered them. They did not even spare Saint-Irénée, not even Saint-Martin de Tours; and the remains of these two great men were thrown into the Rhône and the Loire respectively. . . . A last desecration crowned all the others: the monument of Jeanne d'Arc was thrown down from the top of the bridge of Orléans, thrown down by French hands!"¹

At the beginning of the war, the Protestant army, though inferior in numbers to that of the Triumvirs, was superior in quality. Its cavalry was composed almost exclusively of gentlemen volunteers; and the majority of the old soldiers who had been disbanded under François II had joined the Huguenots. The lieutenants of the Prince de Condé, Soubise, La Rochefoucauld, the Prince de Porcien, and, above all, the two Châtillons, Andelot and Coligny, were men of proved military capacity; and the Huguenot pastors co-operated with the chiefs to establish order, piety, and good morals. The religious sentiment produced in a few hours the discipline which soldiers acquire ordinarily after months of instruction. There was no drunkenness, no ribaldry, no gambling; "nothing but psalms were sung; it was impossible to protect or to conceal the courtesans, and so soon as one was discovered, they compelled the man who was keeping her to espouse her."²

¹ Henri Martin, *Histoire de France jusqu'en 1789*.

² But this régime of austerity did not last more than two months, and at the taking of Beaugency at the beginning of July, the Calvinists plundered the inhabitants without distinction of religion, maltreated women and conducted themselves in a most shameful manner.

At first, Fortune smiled upon the Reformers, who, thanks to the organisation of their churches, were far better prepared for hostilities than their adversaries. The principal towns of Central France, Tours, Blois, and Bourges, declared against the Triumvirate and admitted Huguenot garrisons; Rouen and Le Havre in Normandy, Lyons and many cities in the South, fell into their hands. For a few weeks the movement seemed irresistible. But the Catholic party was by far the stronger. It had secured the person of the young King and forced Catherine to side with it, and thus had at its disposal the Treasury and most of the permanent forces of the realm. It appealed also to the Catholic States for assistance, and obtained from Philip II an auxiliary corps of 4000 Spaniards, which operated in Guienne and Gascony; while the Duke of Savoy sent troops into the Rhône Valley. By the end of August almost all the towns of importance, seized at the outset by the Huguenots, had been recovered; while their capital of Orléans had been isolated by the capture of Bourges, which assured its communication, with the South.

The Protestants had, immediately on the outbreak of hostilities, despatched delegates to England, invoking the community of religion and the cause of Christ, and summoning Elizabeth, "with all humility and pitiable lamentation," to undertake the defence of the churches. Elizabeth, however, saw in the troubles of France only an occasion to conclude an advantageous bargain. Obligated on her accession to ratify the Treaty of Cateau-Cambrésis, which had ceded Calais to France for eight years, she had sworn to recover this town so soon as possible; and, now that the Huguenot leaders found themselves in such dire straits, they were obliged to accept her terms. Accordingly, on September 20, 1562, the Ambassadors of Condé signed, on behalf of the prince, a treaty at Hampton Court, which stipulated that, in return for a loan of 140,000 crowns and a con-

tingent of 6,000 men, Le Havre and Dieppe were to be placed in her hands, and to remain in occupation of the English until Calais was restored to them.

Condé and Coligny ratified without reserve this convention. Subsequently, they pretended that they had overlooked or misinterpreted the clause relative to Calais. It is, of course, possible that these two soldiers, in the midst of the preoccupations of the war, had accepted the conditions without examining them too closely; but it seems little probable.

Elizabeth pretended that she was at war merely with the "tyrannical House of Guise," to deliver from their hands her friend and ally the King of France; but this transparent fiction deceived no one, and the conditions of the English alliance were received in France with a great outburst of indignation. Guise first attempted to march on Le Havre before the English could be put in possession of the town; then, recognising the impossibility of saving Le Havre while Rouen remained in the hands of the Protestants, he committed perhaps the most disinterested and patriotic action of his whole career. To avert the scandal and disgrace of a Prince of the Blood betraying his country, he offered Condé peace, the Edict of January, and the free and peaceable exercise of the Reformed religion throughout the realm, in fact, all that the vanquished Huguenots could have reasonably claimed if the war had been favourable to them, if the prince would join his forces to his to drive out "the ancient enemies of the Crown."¹ Condé, realising the odium which he was bringing upon himself and his party, hesitated. But Throckmorton, who had joined him at Orléans,² insisted that, after allowing

¹ Throckmorton to Cecil, September 9, 1562.

² Throckmorton, whose intrigues with the Huguenots had rendered him odious to the Catholics, had been recalled by Elizabeth before the news of the English intervention reached France, and subsequently replaced by Sir Thomas Smith. He left Paris with a convoy on its way to the Catholic army, which, as he had probably foreseen, was captured by the Huguenots, who conducted it and the Ambassador to Condé at Orléans.

Elizabeth to commit herself, and assuring her, as he had just done, that the Huguenots remained faithful to the Treaty of Hampton Court, he could not without ignominy accept Guise's propositions. He therefore rejected them.

On the rejection of his overtures, Guise, who had already invested Rouen, began to press the siege vigorously, in the hope of at least preventing the English from entering that town, and of checking their progress in Normandy. On October 2, the first detachment of the English army sailed from Portsmouth, and on the 4th, Sir Adrian Poynings, with 3,000 men, was in possession of Le Havre. Elizabeth, desirous only of securing an equivalent for Calais, had declined to allow her troops to pass beyond the lines of Le Havre and Dieppe; but, at the risk of incurring her anger, Poynings sent 500 men up the Seine in barges to endeavour to make their way into Rouen. They were fired upon at the shallows of Caudébecque, where one barge ran aground. Its occupants were conveyed to the camp of the besieging army, where Guise decided to treat them as filibusters and caused them to be hanged on trees, with the following inscription above their heads: "*Pendus pour estre venus contre la volonté de la royne d'Angleterre au service des huguenots.*" The rest of the English succeeded in making their way into Rouen, to play the part of brave men there before they joined their murdered comrades.

The young King and the Regent were present at the siege. The town was defended by Montgomery, whose person Catherine was particularly anxious to secure, in order to "sacrifice him to the ostentation of her conjugal grief"; while the Triumvirs were not less eager to deprive the Huguenots of this brave and experienced chief, who had caused Bourges to revolt and who enjoyed an immense popularity throughout Normandy. Fort Sainte-Catherine, built on the declivity which dominates the town, was the key of the position. It was defended by some of the best soldiers in the

Protestant army, commanded by veterans of the wars of Henri II, who had served under Andelot and were devoted to him, and who fought, not for the Reformed religion, for which they cared little or nothing, but for their colonel-general. These brave men sustained for some days the attacks of almost the entire Royal army; but at length, on October 6, the fort was taken by assault, and the garrison butchered to a man. The young King was brought to witness this military orgy, and, so soon as it was over, the Queen-mother promenaded, with her maids-of-honour, among the bleeding and stripped corpses. Amidst the dead was discovered the body of a young girl, who had fought disguised as a soldier. Catherine requested it to be shown to her, and examined it with curiosity.

On the ruins of the captured fort, on Mont Saint-Hilaire and on all the heights which surrounded the town, Guise caused batteries to be erected, which cannonaded the ramparts without intermission, while the trenches were pushed right up to the moat. He hoped to convince the besieged of the uselessness of further resistance, and to bring about a capitulation, which would save the town, one of the richest in the realm, from a sack, which would be a national calamity. But Montgomery was determined to hold out to the last man.

Guise, the Constable, and Antoine de Bourbon descended into the trenches to encourage the soldiers, and Catherine herself braved the cannon-shots and arquebus-balls and "regarded them as though they were nothing." In response to the remonstrances of Guise and Montmorency, she merely laughed and inquired "why she should spare herself more than themselves." On the 13th, an attempt was made to carry the town by storm; the struggle lasted from ten o'clock in the morning until seven in the evening, and terminated in the repulse of the assailants with heavy loss. But another assault, delivered on the following

day, gave the Catholics possession of the Faubourg Saint-Hilaire, after six hours' sanguinary fighting. On the 16th, during a third assault, the King of Navarre, who had rashly exposed himself to the fire from the ramparts, was struck by an arquebus-ball in the left shoulder. His chivalrous courage in the heat of battle compensated in some measure for his pusillanimity on other occasions.

On the following day, there was a parley, and a deputation from Rouen offered to surrender the town, if the Catholic lords quitted the Court. This proposition was refused, as was a subsequent offer to capitulate, on condition that the Court pardoned and recalled the Prince de Condé. On the 26th, following several days of desperate fighting, the besiegers succeeded in exploding a mine which made an immense breach in the ramparts; and, after a furious cannonade, they advanced to the assault, under the eyes of the Court, which had established itself on Mont Sainte-Catherine. The struggle was of the most murderous character, the fighting between the English contingent and the Scots in the French service being particularly ferocious. But, at length, numbers prevailed, and the Catholics penetrated into the town, carrying fire and sword everywhere and robbing and murdering indiscriminately. For these atrocities, it is but just to observe, Guise was in no way responsible; indeed, previous to the assault, he had harangued the troops, bidding them remember that they were Frenchmen, and that Rouen was one of the principal towns of France, and promising each man a bounty, if they abstained from pillage and outrage. But the evil example of the ruffianly German auxiliaries, who sacked and destroyed the houses and cut the throats of men, women, and children, infected the rest of the army, and, like Wellington at Badajoz, Guise found himself powerless to restrain them.

The sack of Rouen lasted a week. "Thus," writes Castelnau, "this great town, full of all kinds of riches,

was pillaged for the space of eight days, without any regard being paid to which religion the inhabitants professed, and this, notwithstanding the fact that they had, on the morrow of its capture, caused it to be proclaimed, on pain of death, that each company, to whatever nation it might belong, should leave the town and retire to the camp. Very few obeyed, with the exception of the Swiss, who have always shown great discipline and obedience."

The doctors who attended the King of Navarre had not been able to extract the ball because, some writers declare, Antoine, who was a bad patient, refused to endure the necessary suffering. This, joined to his imprudent behaviour, cost him his life. On learning that Rouen had fallen, he insisted on making a sort of triumphal progress through the captured town in a litter borne on the shoulders of the Swiss. Then he proceeded by boat to Andelys, and, inveterate sensualist as he was, sent for his mistress, Mlle. de Rouet—*la belle Rouet*, as the Court called her—one of Catherine's *filles d'honneur*, and "behaved as though he considered that kings were immortal." The result was that his wound inflamed and mortified, and he died on November 17, at the age of forty-two, "still flattering himself with the hopes raised by the King of Spain."

Cy-gist le corps au vers en proye
Du roy qui mourut pour la Roye (Rouet).
Cy-gist qui quitta Jésus-Christ
Pour un royaume par escript,¹
Et sa femme très vertueuse
Pour une puante morveuse.

So ran a Huguenot epitaph on the ill-fated Antoine, who left as his heir a boy of nine years old, destined one day to succeed to the throne of France, through the common ruin of the Valois and the Guises. His death, which raised Condé to the position of first Prince of

¹ "Un royaume par escript" means the illusory kingdom in the South promised Antoine by Philip II, as compensation for Spanish Navarre.

the Blood, naturally strengthened the Protestant cause ; but, at the same time, greatly increased the influence of Guise, by removing the Lieutenant-General of the Kingdom, the only man, save the Constable, who, in conjunction with the Regent, was able to bridle his ambition.

CHAPTER XX

Condé determines to stake the last chances of his party in a great battle—He advances upon Paris—Abortive negotiations with Catherine—Condé marches into Normandy, pursued by the Catholic army—Battle of Dreux—The Constable and Condé are taken prisoners, and Saint-André killed—Chivalrous treatment of Condé by Guise, who now finds himself master of the situation—Condé imprisoned at the Château of Onzain—His attempt to escape frustrated—Guise lays siege to Orléans—On the eve of the final assault he is assassinated by a Huguenot gentleman, Poltrot de Méré—His last hours—Effect of his death upon the political situation—Flight and capture of Poltrot de Méré—He accuses Coligny of having instigated the crime—The Admiral denies the accusation, but confesses that he rejoices at the death of Guise—His conduct considered—Barbarous execution of Poltrot—Peace of Amboise.

THE intervention of the English, if it had served no other purpose, had drawn off the Catholic army from the projected siege of Orléans, and Condé, ever sanguine, did not allow himself to be cast down by the reverses his cause had sustained. "We have lost our two castles of Bourges and Rouen," said he, "employing a chess metaphor, "but we shall take their knights"; and he was eager to stake the last chances of his party in a great battle. At the beginning of November, the news that a considerable force of German mercenaries which Andelot had succeeded in raising in the Rhineland was on the way to join him determined the prince to leave Orléans and advance upon Paris; and on November 8 he began his march, accompanied by Coligny and Throckmorton. At Pithiviers, on the 11th, he effected his junction with the German levies, which were composed of 3,300 *reiters* and 4,000 *landsknechts*; and, at the head of an army of some 15,000 men, more than one-third of whom were cavalry, he moved slowly towards the capital, taking and pillaging the towns on his line of

march, massacring the priests and sacking the churches, in revenge for the atrocities committed by the Catholics at Rouen.

Paris was very weakly defended, most of its regular garrison being in the field with the Triumvirs, and, had Condé acted with vigour, he might have made himself master of at least a part of the city; but, after a skirmish beneath the ramparts of the Faubourg Saint-Victor, the noise of which so alarmed the Président Le Maistre, who, in the last weeks of Henri II's reign, had denounced the heresy of Anne du Bourg, that he died from fright, he allowed himself to be drawn into negotiations by Catherine.

Condé demanded an "interim" until the Council of Trent, that Catholics and Protestants should "live according to their consciences," a general amnesty, and his own recognition as the first Prince of the Blood. All this, with certain reservations, the Regent appears to have been ready to grant. The difficulty was the English alliance and the promise of Calais to Elizabeth. The blood of the English who had fallen at Rouen gave Elizabeth an additional claim, and one which Condé could not well repudiate; but he expressed to Throckmorton his hope that the Queen would content herself with having earned the gratitude of the Huguenots and not "seek to mix particular causes in a quarrel for religion." A courier having been despatched to London, Elizabeth replied that "the Prince de Condé had bound himself by a solemn act under his hand; if he broke faith with her, he never should count upon her help again; but she trusted that he would never give her cause to accuse him of ingratitude." If he would be constant to his engagements, she would assist him; but she said pointedly that she had sent orders to the Earl of Warwick, who had now taken over the command at Le Havre, that he was to hold the town against all comers, Catholic or Protestant.¹

¹ Elizabeth to Throckmorton, December 14, 1562, cited by Froude.

The delay caused by these abortive negotiations had enabled Guise to arrive with the advance-guard of the army which had besieged Rouen, and, after two unsuccessful attempts to take the city by *camisado*, Condé drew off his forces and marched into Normandy, with the intention of getting into touch with the English at Le Havre. But, owing principally to the immense number of carts for the conveyance of past and future plunder which his German mercenaries insisted on taking with them, his army made such slow progress that the Triumvirs were able to outmarch it, and on December 19 the prince found them barring his way near the town of Dreux.

The royal forces were superior in infantry and artillery to the Huguenots, but the latter had a decided preponderance in cavalry, and the *terrain* was well suited to the effective employment of this arm. Montmorency, who held the command, placed on his right wing the best French infantry, who were chiefly Gascons, and 2,000 Spaniards, who had just joined him; in the centre, the Swiss, 6,000 strong, and on the left, the remainder of the French infantry and a battalion of Bretons. The cavalry filled the intervals between the masses of infantry, the Constable himself, with the men-at-arms, between the centre and left. The Maréchal de Saint-André commanded on the right. As for Guise, he had declined any command, and stationed himself with his own personal followers near the French infantry of the right wing.

The disposition of the Protestant forces was naturally very different; the whole of their cavalry, with the exception of some companies of *reiters*, being sent forward in advance, while the infantry formed their reserve.

After a brief cannonade, Condé, at the head of the French men-at-arms, made a furious charge upon the Swiss, and broke through them. The *reiters*, who followed him, rode among the disordered ranks and

discharged their pistols with murderous effect. The Constable, with his men-at-arms, charged, in his turn, the victorious Huguenot cavalry, in order to give the Swiss time to rally. But fresh Protestant squadrons swooped down upon him with levelled lances, overturning men and horses and driving him back in confusion. Montmorency fought like a lion; and when his horse fell dead beneath him, he mounted another, which one of his officers brought him, and plunged again into the *mêlée*. But a pistol-shot struck him in the jaw, and he fell to the ground, where he was immediately surrounded by infuriated *reiters*, crying out: "*Schelm Constable!*" and threatening to blow out his brains. But the Prince de Porcien intervened, and the old warrior surrendered to a German captain, Volpert von Derst, and was carried away from the field of carnage, already red with the blood of the slain, amongst others with that of his son, Montmorency-Montbérón.

However, the Swiss, though broken by so many charges, had not given ground. The Protestant *lands-knechts* advanced to finish them. But, at the sight of these mercenaries, whom they cordially hated as their rivals and competitors in the great market of men, the mountaineers closed their ranks and rushed forward to meet them, "with yells of rage, eyes flaming with fury, and faces covered with blood and dust." A panic seized the Germans; they wavered, broke and fled. But all the Huguenot cavalry—men-at-arms, *reiters* and light horse—fell again upon the Swiss, and, after sustaining two further charges, the latter, who had lost nearly all their officers, decided to retreat. The victorious Calvinists raised shouts of triumph, in the belief that the victory was already won; but Coligny pointed to the right wing of the Royalists, which had not yet been engaged, and observed: "Soon we shall see that cloud burst upon us."

The Duc de Guise had remained motionless during the early stages of the battle, like the Constable on the

day of Renty, and had beheld without budging the defeat of Montmorency and of the Swiss. He seemed indifferent: he had received no orders. But now he judged that the moment to intervene had arrived, and advancing at the head of his cavalry, supported on his right by the Gascons and on his left by the Spanish infantry, he attacked the Protestant foot, whom, after a furious struggle, he utterly routed. At the same moment, the cavalry of Saint-André and the Constable's second son, Damville, charged the *reiters* of Condé, who took to flight, throwing into hopeless confusion the French cavalry, which was advancing to their succour. Condé himself, while endeavouring to rally his weary and disordered squadrons, was wounded in the hand and obliged to surrender to Damville, who thus avenged, by the capture of the Huguenot leader, the fate of his father; and the Protestants began to give way on all sides.

However, the Admiral succeeded in rallying the Huguenots behind the shelter of a wood, and suddenly reappeared, with a large body of horse, on the right of the victorious army. The Maréchal de Saint-André, anxious to complete the defeat of the Protestants, threw himself upon Coligny at the head of his cavalry, but was repulsed with heavy loss, and he himself taken prisoner. Unhappily for Saint-André, there happened to be among his captors a young man named Perdrigot de Bobigny, a son of the clerk of the Hôtel de Ville in Paris, whom the marshal had once caused to be publicly castigated, for having had the presumption to aspire to the hand of one of his nieces. Bobigny had long cherished against Saint-André the most violent hatred, and promptly proceeded to take his revenge, by blowing out the unfortunate marshal's brains with a pistol.

Coligny then advanced to attack Guise, whose troops had suffered so heavily that they seemed incapable of offering an effective resistance. But the duke had kept in reserve a battalion of French infantry, which now

came up at the double, bristling with pikes. The Admiral charged them furiously, but could make little impression on their serried ranks; and, darkness coming on, he drew off the remnant of the Huguenot army in excellent order, the victors being far too exhausted to attempt any pursuit. The battle had lasted from one o'clock in the afternoon until five, and so great had been the carnage that nearly one-third of the forces engaged had fallen.

The Constable was despatched, in charge of Andelot, to Orléans, where he had the Princesse de Condé for hostess; while Condé was conducted by Damville to Guise's quarters. In these detestable wars, prisoners were often treated with great harshness and cruelty, and sometimes, as we have just seen, their lives were not even spared when they happened to fall into the hands of some personal enemy. But Guise received Condé with as much courtesy and deference as the Black Prince had shown his royal captive at Poitiers. He placed at his disposal the peasant's cottage in which he was quartered, apologising for being compelled to give so poor a reception to so illustrious a visitor, and it was only at the prince's repeated request that he consented to share with him this humble lodging. They supped together off the same coarse fare, conversing amicably the while, and the same bundle of straw served them for a bed. The duke, however, could well afford to show magnanimity towards a fallen foe, for not only all the honour, but all the profit of the victory was his. For "the captivity of M. le Connestable," writes Étienne Pasquier, "was not less advantageous to him than that of M. le Prince [Condé]," and, having now no rival but Coligny to fear, the predominance of his ambitious House seemed assured. Charles IX felt himself isolated with his mother between these two powerful subjects, and in the margin of a letter which he had received from Guise, thanking him, with many protestations of devotion, for having created him Lieutenant-General of the

Kingdom, in recognition of his services at the battle of Dreux—the third occasion upon which this office had been conferred upon the duke—the boy wrote: “*Non te fidar, et non serai gabbato*” (Trust not thyself, and thou wilt not be deceived).

As for the Cardinal de Lorraine, who was then at the Council of Trent, he could not conceal his joy at the situation which the victory of Dreux had brought about. “Do they speak any longer at Paris of making us render account?” said he. “From what I can see, my brother and I will render our accounts quite alone. M. le Connestable is prisoner on one side, and M. le Prince on the other. That is what I was asking of them.”

The day after the battle Condé was again entrusted to the care of Damville, who had only surrendered his prisoner to Guise as an act of deference, and who was subsequently constituted his legal guardian by a special authority from the King. Damville, who naturally regarded him as a hostage for the safety of his father, the Constable, guarded him very strictly, though his servants were allowed to remain with him, and a Huguenot pastor named Pérussel, who had also been taken prisoner, was authorised to administer to his spiritual needs, and conducted a long *prêche* in his apartments every day. After being successively conducted to Chartres, Blois, and Amboise in the wake of the Court, he was incarcerated, by the Regent’s orders, in the Château of Onzain, an old feudal fortress about three leagues from the last-named town. Here he succeeded in bribing two of his jailers, and arranged with their assistance to escape in the disguise of a peasant. But one of the men betrayed the plot to Damville, and Condé learned that all had been discovered by seeing the other soldier dangling from a gibbet beneath his window. After this, the prince was deprived of his servants, placed in solitary confinement, and most rigorously guarded; and a rumour began to spread, though it was probably without foundation, that the Guises intended to compel

Catherine to have him brought to trial again for high treason.

Meanwhile, the Duc de Guise had laid siege to Orléans, the last stronghold left to the Reformers. The town taken and the line of the Loire secured, it was his intention to call out the *ban* and the *arrière-ban*, for which purpose a tax had been levied on the revenues of the Church, overwhelm Coligny, who with the Huguenot cavalry was overrunning Normandy, drive the English from Le Havre and Dieppe, and convert his office of Lieutenant-General of the Kingdom into a dictatorship.

The defenders of Orléans, decimated by famine and the plague, were incapable of offering more than a feeble resistance; the outworks were quickly captured, and the final assault was fixed for the night of February 18-19, when an unexpected catastrophe intervened to prevent it.

Since the massacre of Vassy, the most implacable hatred of the Huguenots, formerly directed against the Cardinal de Lorraine, had been diverted to the Duc de Guise; the zealots of the party dreamed only of the death of the "tyrant," not only that death which the warrior metes out to his foe on the honourable field of battle, but death at any price, by any means. Jewish tradition glorified tyrannicide, and in the minds of the more fanatical Calvinists its violent spirit tended to extinguish altogether the gentle teaching of the Gospel. "More than one Huguenot, excited by the study of the Old Testament and the *Institution chrétienne* of Calvin, believed himself called upon to play the part of Judith or of Jehu." Several projects against the lives of the Catholic leader had already been formed, though, for various reasons, no actual attempt had yet been made to put any of them into execution. Montaigne assures us that an attempt to assassinate the Duc de Guise had been planned during the siege of Rouen by a gentleman serving in the Catholic army, but that the duke was warned of it by the Queen-mother. The following

day, while directing the fire of the batteries established on Mont Sainte-Catherine, the duke caught sight of this gentleman and summoned him before him. The other lost his head, confessed everything, and demanded pardon, declaring that he had not been actuated by personal animosity, but by the interests of the Reformed party, and that he had been persuaded that "it would be an action full of piety to extirpate, in whatever manner possible, so powerful an enemy of his religion." "I intend to show you," replied Guise, "how much gentler is the religion I hold than that which you profess. Yours has counselled you to kill me without listening to me, although from me you have received no injury; but mine commands me to pardon you, although you stand convicted of having desired to kill me without reason." And he allowed him to depart safe and sound. It was, however, this same magnanimous prince who had undertaken, in the name of the religion whose gentleness he vaunted, the extermination of so many thousands of his fellow-countrymen, from whom he had "received no injury"; and, as Henri Martin observes, it is difficult to reconcile his conduct and his language on this occasion with the butchery of Amboise or the sacrilegious mummery of Saverne. However, characters like that of Guise abound in contradictions, and it is certain that the duke, so cruel and ruthless before the war began, was much less so in the war itself.

Among those who had become convinced that it was their mission to rid the world of the chief of the Catholics, was a gentleman of Angoumois, Jean de Poltrot, Sieur de Méré. Poltrot, who was at this time about twenty-six years of age, had passed part of his youth in Spain, and his proficiency in the language of that country had caused him to be employed as a spy in the war against the Spaniards. Subsequently, he had embraced Calvinism in its most fanatical form, and had been compromised in the Conspiracy of Amboise. According to La Popelinière, he was "a little man, but extremely

intelligent, though so rash and indiscreet as to consider nothing impossible." D'Aubigné accuses him of being "rash and boastful," and relates that he used to tell every one who was willing to listen to him of his intention to kill the "Guisard," and used to show them bullets cast expressly for that purpose, "whereby he rendered himself ridiculous."

But, ridiculous as Poltrot might appear, he was, nevertheless, in grim earnest. After having served for a while in the light horse of Soubise, then commanding the Protestant troops at Lyons, he passed into the little army of Andelot, encamped around Orléans, and, towards the end of January, made his way to the Catholic camp at Messas, near Beaugency, representing himself as a deserter from the Huguenots. As desertions from the Protestant ranks were not uncommon, he was received without any misgivings by Guise, who admitted him into his suite of gentlemen, assigned him a place at his table, and brought him with him to the siege of Orléans, where "he often accompanied M. de Guise from his lodging as far as the Portereau, whither the said lord used to go every day."¹

For a time, Poltrot contented himself with resuming his former *rôle* of spy; but, when he learned that Orléans was on the point of succumbing, and that the assault which was to deliver the town into the hands of the Catholics had been fixed for the night of February 18-19, he decided that the moment to strike had come.

On the evening of that day, just as dusk was falling, after having inspected, for the last time, the batteries and the positions of the Royal troops and divested himself of his cuirass, the Duc de Guise mounted his horse and set out for his quarters at the Château des Vaslins, near Olivet, where he was to meet his wife, from whom he had been separated since the commencement of hostilities. Anne d'Este had been sent by the

¹ Brantôme.

Queen-mother to employ her influence with the duke to save from pillage the inhabitants of Orléans, in the event of the town being taken by assault.

Guise was accompanied by an official of the Treasury, Tristan de Restaing, who had come to him with a message from Catherine, a page named François Racine de Villegamblain, and several of his lackeys; and had sent on in advance one of his gentlemen, the Sieur de Crenay, to announce his approaching arrival to the duchess.

Crenay crossed the ferry of Saint-Mesmin in a boat, and, on reaching the further bank, met a young man in whom he recognised Poltrot de Méré. Poltrot, who was holding a Spanish horse by the bridle, inquired "when Monsieur would come." Crenay answered that he was very near, upon which the other mounted his horse and rode off.

A few minutes later, Guise and his little escort appeared on the opposite bank, alighted from their horses to cross the ferry, mounted again, and took the road towards the Château de Vaslins at a walking pace. The duke was wearing a buff-coloured doublet, and a hat with a large white feather, which at a short distance rendered him conspicuous enough, even in the gathering darkness. Suddenly, a pistol-shot rang out from behind a hedge along which they were passing, and Guise fell forward on to the neck of his horse. He strove in vain to recover his seat and draw his sword, and, as his companions hurried to his assistance, he fainted. Poltrot had fired at him with a pistol charged with three balls from a distance of six or seven paces, and hit him a little below the right shoulder.

The duke was conveyed to the Château of Vaslins, and Honoré Castillan and Vincent, surgeons to the Queen-mother, were summoned in all haste. Already the wounded man had recovered consciousness, and he strove to console his wife and his eldest son, the Prince de Joinville, who were weeping silently beside his bed.

He embraced them both tenderly, and said to the young prince, who was himself destined to die one day by the hand of assassins: "May God do thee the favour of making thee an honourable man!"

The surgeons, having arrived, made an examination of the wound and declared that it was not dangerous. Catherine, writing two days later to the Cardinal de Lorraine, informs him that the bullet "had not touched the bones or entered the trunk"; while Florimond Robertet, Secretary of State, writing to the Cardinal de Guise and the Duc de Nemours on February 19 and 20 respectively says that Castillan and Vincent were convinced that the duke would suffer nothing but pain, and that he was in no danger of dying. "If you saw him," he continues, "you would not find him changed in appearance, nor in his firmness or accustomed resolution." The duke himself did not believe that his condition was serious, and conversed with Sebastien de l'Aubespine and other Ministers who had come to visit him concerning the efforts of the Regent to bring about a termination of hostilities.

The third of the Guise brothers, the Cardinal de Guise, who, on the day of the crime, had been in Paris on a mission to the Parlement, arrived on the evening of the 22nd, and he, too, inclined to the opinion that the wounded man was in no danger. However, the duke's temperature was alarmingly high, and the surgeons began to fear that the pistol had been charged with several bullets, and that one or more remained in the body. They accordingly proposed to enlarge and probe the wound, to which the patient consented with admirable courage, begging them not to allow themselves to be interrupted by any exclamations of pain which he might utter. This operation resulted in the discovery of an abscess and two bullets, joined together by a piece of iron thread. The bullets having been extracted and the wound cauterised, Guise appeared to experience some relief; but the fever continued to increase, and the

following evening the surgeons felt obliged to inform him that his case was hopeless.

The duke received the sentence with unalterable firmness and Christian resignation, and when the Cardinal de Guise approached to exhort him to prepare for death by receiving the last Sacraments of the Church, said : " Ah, brother ! I have loved you much in the past, but I love you still more now, since you are doing me a true brotherly turn. You could not announce to me a thing more agreeable than to urge me to take the remedies ordained by the Church, in order to have life and safety with God."

The dying man then made his confession to Lancelot de Carle, Archbishop of Riez, after which he asked for his wife and son to bid them farewell. If we are to credit the first edition of an account of Guise's last moments published by the Bishop of Riez, the duke, in taking leave of his wife, avowed to the duchess the faults and frailties of his youth, and added : " I beg you to be willing to excuse and to pardon me them, *as I pardon you*. How much greater are my offences than yours !"

" These words," observes M. de Ruble, " were not happy. The duke was certainly not ignorant that King Henri II and the Duc de Nemours had made great progress in the good graces of the duchess ; but to recall them solemnly before his death !" When the bishop's work was reprinted, the words we have italicised were suppressed ; but in a third edition they were re-established, though this correction was added to them : " Though I have never entertained any suspicion of you."

Guise retained the use of all his faculties almost up to the end, and passed the night of February 23-24 in recalling the events of his life. One of his last observations related to the affair of Vassy and deserves to be cited : " I beg you to believe," said he, " that the harm which befell those of Vassy happened contrary to my wish ; for I did not go there with the intention of

committing any offence against them. I was the defender, not the aggressor, and when the ardour of those who were with me, and who saw me wounded, caused them to take up arms, I did all in my power to parry their blows and to protect those people from injury."

No one, we think, will be inclined to dispute the first part of this statement; and it is true that he and his retinue had received a good deal of provocation, though nothing which could possibly exonerate such murderous retaliation. But it is certain that he could have intervened "to parry the blows and protect those people from injury" much sooner than he did, and that he subsequently showed no regret for the crime, except in so far as it was calculated to prejudice his relations with the Duke of Würtemberg.

Early the following morning (February 24), he dictated his will, appointing the Cardinal de Lorraine his executor. He directed that he should be buried at Joinville and requested that the shield of Jerusalem, brought back by Godefroy de Bouillon, should be sculptured on his tomb, with the exergue: "*Je veux montrer ce qui est venu de Dieu comme venu de Dieu.*" He left considerable sums to the Duchesse de Guise and expressed a wish that his eldest son, Henri de Lorraine, should marry Catherine d'Albon, only child of the Maréchal de Saint-André. He then heard Mass and received Extreme Unction from the hands of his brother-in-law, the Cardinal of Ferrara; and between ten and eleven o'clock in the forenoon he expired.

Thus died, at the age of forty-four, François de Lorraine, Duc de Guise, whom his contemporaries have named Monsieur de Guys *le Grand*, the most successful French captain of his time, the most vigilant to assure the execution of his orders and the comfort of his soldiers, by whom he was adored, "in all his plans excellent, particularly in the reconnaissance of places, whose talents would have carried him, not to ruin, but to the rule

of all France, in another season and under another brother.”¹

This brother—the crafty, vindictive, cowardly, and unscrupulous Cardinal de Lorraine—had been Guise’s evil genius, drawing him into dangerous projects and useless cruelties, overriding his scruples, and involving him in unworthy intrigues. Some time before his death, the duke had succeeded in disembarassing himself of the cardinal by sending him to the Council of Trent, and there is good reason to believe that, left to himself, he would have shown both moderation and dignity in the exercise of the almost absolute power which had been for the third time placed in his hands. For, ambitious though he was, this miserable internecine strife, with its spectacles of private revenges, of shameless apostacies, of pitiless rapacity, can scarcely have failed to inspire him with disgust; and he must have felt, too, that it was neither Catholic nor Huguenot who stood to gain by its continuance, but the foreigner, and have experienced a secret shame at playing the Spaniards’ game. The Catholic fanatics, who regarded him as their chief, were frequently surprised at the moderation which he displayed towards the enemy and at the sternness with which he repressed their desire for vengeance. Thus, he saved the lives of the Huguenots placed at Montargis under the protection of his mother-in-law, the Duchess of Ferrara, and refused to allow the Château of Châtillon, Coligny’s country-seat, to be sacked or injured in any way.

François de Lorraine had literary tastes. Tacitus is said to have been his favourite reading. He left two folio volumes of memoirs, a regular journal, tracing the course of events from 1547 to 1563, which, though they reveal no literary merit, possess all the interest of historical revelations. Part of them are in the handwriting of the duke himself, the rest in that of his secretary Millet. They were first published in the *Nouvelle*

¹ D’Aubigné.

Collection de Mémoires pour servir à l'histoire de France of Michaud and Poujoulat in 1839.

This sudden and tragic event changed the destinies of France. Guise fell at the moment when Fortune seemed about to place in his hands the power of the ancient mayors of the palace. His death saved the Protestant party and delivered to Catherine de' Medici the authority which she had so long expected and never possessed. The King of Navarre dead, the Triumvirate destroyed, the Cardinal de Lorraine absent from France, there was no longer any Catholic chief to lay down the law to Catherine; she felt that at last she was going to reign. As usual, she dissimulated. She affected as much grief as anger at the murder of Guise, and, before even the duke breathed his last, she assured to his heir, the Prince de Joinville, the office of Grand Master and the government of Champagne. The Constable, who, it will be remembered, had been deprived of the former charge at the beginning of the previous reign, was a prisoner in Orléans and unable to come and claim it; and Catherine was only too glad to be able to invest a lad of thirteen with an office which conferred so much power on its possessor, and to revive, at the same time, the rivalry between the Guises and the Montmorencies. Therefore, though secretly rejoiced at the tragedy which had disembarassed her of so inconvenient a guardian, she accorded all the dignities which the widow of "*le Balafré*" demanded for her son, as though her regret at his loss permitted her to refuse nothing to his family, and she expressed the most ardent desire to avenge the assassination of the Catholic hero.

If, after firing the fatal shot, Poltrot had returned quietly to his victim's quarters and taken his usual place at the supper-table with the other gentlemen of Guise's suite, no one would, in all probability, have suspected him. But, "troubled by the greatness of the deed which he had committed," he took to flight, and galloped like a madman all night through the woods, only to

discover, when day broke, that he had been riding in a circle and had returned almost to the exact point whence he started. He believed himself bewitched; his horse sank down from exhaustion, and he sought refuge in a lonely farm, so pale and agitated that he was soon questioned by the peasants, and, his account of himself being unsatisfactory, seized and handed over to some passing soldiers, who conducted him to the Catholic camp. He was brought before Catherine, who had arrived on February 21, and was interrogated in the presence of the Privy Council, when, not content with having slain by assassination one of the two greatest men in France, he endeavoured to dishonour the other by a lie. He declared that, in the preceding summer, Coligny had instigated him to murder the Duc de Guise; that he had then refused; but that, in January, the Admiral had returned to the charge and had succeeded in overcoming his reluctance, with the aid of the exhortations of two Protestant pastors, one of whom was Théodore de Bèze. He also accused La Rochefoucauld and two or three other Huguenot captains, and asserted that Coligny had commissioned other gentlemen to make the principal nobles share the fate of Guise. The Regent himself was, according to him, in danger.

Informed of the charges against them, Coligny, as well as La Rochefoucauld and Bèze, who were with the Admiral in Normandy, hastened to repudiate them in a memoir addressed to Catherine, wherein they demonstrated the improbability of Poltrot's charges, the work of a man who was seeking to postpone the punishment of his crime by involving in it highly-placed personages. Coligny declared that he had seen Poltrot for the first time in the preceding January. It was true that he had taken him into his pay and sent him to Guise's camp as a spy; but he denied absolutely having given him any other mission. It was true that, at the moment when he was starting for Normandy, Poltrot had said to him that "it would be easy to kill the Duc de Guise,"

but he had thought it "frivolous talk," unworthy of notice, and he had "never opened his lips to incite Poltrot to undertake it." "For the rest," he continued, "I have many times warned the Cardinal de Lorraine and Madame de Guise of plots against the life of the duke; but, as I have been duly informed that the said de Guise and the Maréchal de Saint-André had commissioned certain persons to kill the Prince de Condé, myself, and my brother Andelot, since that time, when I have heard any one say, that, if he were able, he would kill the Duc de Guise, even in his camp, I have no longer dissuaded him from it. But, on my life and on my honour, I have never induced any person to do it. What I say is not out of any regret that I feel for the death of M. de Guise, for I esteem it the greatest blessing which could have befallen this kingdom and the Church of God, and particularly myself and all my House."

The candour of this avowal alarmed Coligny's friends, who urged him in vain to modify it. This haughty calm in the face of the dishonouring accusation of Poltrot was, indeed, calculated to create the suspicion of a secret complicity. Instead of revolting against the accusation, Coligny did not condescend to justify himself; he accepted the accomplished fact, though he declared that he had not suggested it; he disavowed the assassin, but he did not deny that the crime was agreeable to him. His conduct has been much discussed by historians, but, in our opinion, the explanation given by M. Forneron probably comes nearest to the truth.

"This serenity," he writes, "proceeded assuredly from the disdain of a superior mind for unworthy suspicions. Just as the Duc de Guise had preferred to be regarded as the abettor of his servants who massacred the peasants of Vassy, rather than disavow them by denouncing the crime, in like manner Coligny preferred to incur the hatred of a family which regarded vengeance as a sacred duty, rather than defend himself against an

unjust attack. But his apparently maladroit answers proceeded also from a bad sentiment. He saw the fanatics of his party rejoicing at a blow which promised them deliverance, and he did not dare to repudiate the praises of those whose feelings were sufficiently base to do him honour on account of it. It is very nearly with the same idea that the Duc de Guise had abstained from repressing the acclamations of the enthusiastic Catholics who had so low an opinion of him as to believe that the massacre of Vassy was a deliberate act on his part. The punishment of all party chiefs is to draw along in their train a troop of fanatics who render them the accomplices of their most contemptible sentiments, and connect them with them by suppositions, when they are unable to do so by deeds. To repudiate them is to lose one's power: sad consequence of dissensions which place superior and generous minds in dependence on the rapacious and the violent! . . . Coligny was not the man who arms an assassin; his fault was not to have disavowed the immoral joy of his party, and not to have sought safety in a treason."¹

Coligny had terminated his justification by begging the Regent to keep Poltrot in security until after peace had been concluded, in order that the confrontation of the murderer with those whom he accused might cause the truth to be known. This request, however, was not listened to, and Poltrot, who had been sent to Paris, was brought to trial before the Parlement, and on March 18 condemned to be tortured with red-hot pincers and afterwards to be dismembered by horses. This barbarous sentence was executed the same day in the most revolting circumstances, for the horses failed to complete their task, and the limbs of the wretched man had to be hacked off with a sword. So terrible was the spectacle that, while witnessing it, the young Madame de Montmorency-Thoré, daughter-in-law of the Constable, is said to have fallen dead from horror.

¹ *Les Ducs de Guise et leur époque.*

During his last days, Poltrot, almost insane with terror at the horrible torments which he knew lay in store for him, made various conflicting statements, now withdrawing, now repeating, his accusations, and striving desperately to obtain even a brief respite. He exculpated Théodore de Bèze, who, it may be mentioned, had declared that he had never so much as set eyes on the assassin, much less instigated him; accused Soubise and Andelot; declared that the Admiral had not suggested the crime to him, but knew and approved of his design, and so forth. In fact, so contradictory were his allegations that it was plainly impossible to attach the least value to them. The hastening of his execution inclines one to the belief that the Regent wished to hold suspended over Coligny's head an accusation which could neither be proved nor refuted; everything which tended to weaken and dishonour the leaders of the rival parties, and to undermine and ruin powerful personalities, naturally served to strengthen her own position.

The death of François de Lorraine paved the way for peace, and, through the intervention of Catherine and the Princesse de Condé, it was arranged that the Prince de Condé and the Constable should meet and discuss its conditions. On March 7, the two illustrious prisoners met on the Île-aux-Bœufs, an island in the Loire, situated a little below Orléans, and "parliamented" together for two hours. Then they parted, without having arrived at any agreement, since Condé insisted that the Edict of January should be re-established in its entirety, to which Montmorency absolutely declined to consent, declaring that the Catholics would refuse to observe it. The Constable was escorted back to Orléans, and the prince to the Catholic camp at Saint-Mesmin.

On the morrow, the conference was renewed, this time in the presence of the Queen-mother. Catherine had always exercised a great influence over Condé, and only a few months before, in an interview between them at Thoury, she had all but brought him to conclude

peace on her own conditions, when Coligny had interfered and caused the negotiations to be broken off. Now, however, Coligny was far away, and Catherine did not fail to press her advantage home. She made an eloquent appeal to the prince's patriotism ; she flattered him ; she "insinuated that if he were to conclude peace without being too obstinate over the conditions, he should be elevated to the rank of the late King of Navarre,¹ his brother, and might do, from that time, all that he wished for those of the Religion."

Condé was ambitious and he was far from unsusceptible to flattery. Moreover, he was a bad subject for prison-life and ardently desired to regain his freedom. He was already won over, already prepared to accept important modifications of the Edict of January, when, that same evening, with the consent of the Regent, he entered Orléans to confer with the Council of the Protestant Association.

He found the Council divided into two sharply-defined parties ; on the one side, were all the ministers, to the number of seventy-two, with Théodore de Bèze at their head ; on the other, the great majority of the Huguenot gentlemen.

"The men of war demanded only peace ; the ministers of the Holy Gospel called for the continuance of the war, at least until the Edict of January was re-established in its entirety, and invited the prince to require the King to mete out rigorous punishment to all 'atheists, freethinkers, Anabaptists, Servetists, and other heretics and schismatics.' Barely escaped from the stake themselves, they demanded the right to drag other victims to it."²

With ill-concealed impatience, Condé listened to the demands of these intractable theologians ; then, turning from them, he invited his old companions-in-arms to express their opinions. With one voice, these gentlemen,

¹ The post of Lieutenant-General of the Kingdom.

² Henri Martin, *Histoire de France jusqu'en 1789*.

who were heartily weary of the war and asked only to be allowed to return to their homes, declared themselves willing to accept peace on the conditions which the Court was prepared to offer. Strong in their support, the prince felt that he could afford to defy the ministers and the democratic section of the party; and when, on March 23, Coligny, fresh from his victorious campaign in Normandy, arrived at Orléans to take part in the negotiations, he found that he was too late. The Edict, or Peace, of Amboise, had been promulgated in that town on the 19th, and published in the royal camp on the 22nd.

This edict permitted all "barons, châtelains, high justiciaries, and lords holding fiefs with vassals, to practise freely in their houses, with their families and subjects, the religion which they call reformed." Other gentlemen holding fiefs (without vassals) and residing on the estates of the King had the same right for themselves and their families only. The *bourgeoisie* was not so favourably treated: liberty of conscience was generally recognised, and the Reformed religion permitted in the towns in which the "said religion" had been exercised up to the preceding March 7; but in the rest of France it was not allowed to be celebrated save in those under the jurisdiction of a bailiff or a seneschal, and, even in them, places of worship were not to be erected except in the suburbs. In the capital and within the boundaries of the viscounty and provostship of Paris, it was forbidden altogether. Condé and all his followers were declared good and loyal subjects of the King and declared to have taken up arms with good intentions and for his service; a general amnesty for all offences committed during the war was proclaimed, and all decrees relating to religious matters since the death of Henri II were annulled.

Coligny was deeply mortified at Condé's surrender, in which he suspected that personal considerations had counted for not a little, and declared, with pardonable

exaggeration, that “by a stroke of the pen more churches had been ruined than the enemy would have razed in ten years.” As for the Huguenot ministers, they were exasperated to the last degree against the prince, stigmatized the treaty as that of a man who had left half his manhood in captivity, and accused him of having yielded to the seductions of Catherine’s Court, and of having *balené* her maids of honour.

In point of fact, the Peace of Amboise proved a serious check to the spread of the Reformed religion. From that time, Protestantism appeared to be incarnate in one class and passed for the religion of the nobility; the conversions became less numerous; the force of expansion was exhausted. For not having forgotten that he was a prince and a gentleman, Condé compromised the future of his Church and his party.

END OF VOL. I

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